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THE GHADAR MOVEMENT *(Special Issue)*



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PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA**

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THE PANJAB PAST AND PRESENT

Vol. XXXIV, Part-I

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PREFACE

It gives me immense pleasure and sense of pride to place in your hands the special issue of the journal *The Panjab Past & Present* on the Ghadar movement. It is well known fact that *The Panjab Past & Present* is a prestigious bi-annual journal relating to the history of Punjab. Very eminent scholars and historians of different spheres have been contributing to this journal since its inception. Apart from the general issues, the department has also brought out some special issues on the different themes relating to the discipline of history of this region.

The year 2013-14 is being celebrated as the centenary year of the Ghadar movement, popularly known as anti-colonial, anti-imperial, the first secular and organized armed protest against the British rule. It has its own ramifications. Keeping in view the significance and contribution of the Ghadar movement to the Indian freedom struggle, a special programme has been chalked out by the Punjabi University, Patiala to pay homage to the Ghadarites of the movement. The department of Punjab Historical Studies has also decided to bring out a special issue of our esteemed journal *The Panjab Past & Present* on this occasion. It was decided to get this issue released on the two day national seminar dedicated to the centenary of Ghadar movement, to be held on 5-6 November, 2013 at Punjabi University campus. So this is our humble effort and befitting tribute and salute to the valiant martyrs of the Ghadar movement.

The present issue carries fifteen research papers and a book review written by eminent/prominent historians and scholars pertaining to the subject. These articles focus on the ideology and the different aspects of the Ghadar movement. On behalf of the department, I am thankful to all the contributors whose writings have enriched the present issue. We are also grateful to our worthy Vice-Chancellor, Dr Jaspal Singh for his guidance, help and co-operation in getting this issue published. Without his personal interest this issue would not have been materialized. Dr A.S. Chawla, Registrar; Professor Dhanwant Kaur, Incharge Publication Bureau; S. Harjit Singh of Publication Bureau and S. Charanjit Singh, Proof Reader of our department deserve special thanks and mention for their efforts and help for the timely completion and publication of this issue.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN THE PUNJAB BEFORE 1857

J.S. Grewal*

A general acceptance of the idea that 1857 was the first war of Indian independence has minimized the importance of resistance to British domination in India in different parts of the country before 1857. It has been argued recently that the Sikh wars of 1845-46 and 1848-49 should be seen as 'War of Independence'.¹

The War of Resistance (1845-46)

The first Indian historian to hammer the point that the British had a scheme of conquest in relation to the Punjab was Sita Ram Kohli. He pointed out that William Osborne, military secretary to the Governor-General, Lord Auckland, for example, had put forth the idea that the Punjab should be invaded and occupied immediately after the death of Ranjit Singh. Before sailing for India the Governor-General designate, Lord Ellenborough, solicited the expert military opinion of the Duke of Wellington as to the manner in which a campaign against the Punjab could be successfully conducted. The year starting with the murder of Raja Hira Singh on 21 December 1844 is seen by Sita Ram Kohli as 'the last year of freedom'. The army Panchayats claimed to represent the *Sarbat-Khalsa*, reviving 'the old democratic flavour of the Khalsa Commonwealth of pre-Ranjit Singh days'. Their seal of authority was inscribed with the words '*Panth Khalsa Jeo*', with the invocation of '*Akal Sahai*' above it. A remarkable aspect of the Khalsa's assumption of real authority in the state was the 'enforcement of very rigid discipline among the soldiers'. Evidently, the Sikh soldiery was willing to accept orders of the Khalsa Panth.²

The aggressive attitude of Major Broadfoot and his offensive measures, coupled with the growing armed strength of the British on the frontiers in the time of Lord Auckland, Lord Ellenborough, and Lord Hardinge convinced the Punjabis that war with the English was inevitable. The sentiments of the Khalsa were inflamed. Sikh troops began to move on 24 December, and the first battle of the war was fought at Mudki on 18 December 1845. Kohli underscores the treacherous conduct of Lal Singh, Tej Singh, and Gulab Singh and the heroism of Sardar

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1. Chhanda Chatterjee, 'War of Independence: The Khalsa Against the Company Raj, 1845-46 and 1848-49', *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 39, no. 2, December 2012, pp. 317-36.
2. Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1967, pp. 57-59, 61-67, 77-78, 90, 94-97. For supremacy of the Khalsa, see also Bikramajit Hasrat, *Anglo-Sikh Relations 1799-1849*, Hoshiarpur: Published by Author, 1968, pp. 242-43.

Sham Singh of Atari during the war. The treaty of 9 March 1846 was 'a blend of confiscatory, retributive and repressive clauses'. A supplementary treaty on 11 March ensured an adequate British force for the protection of the Maharaja, and the services of an experienced political officer for reconstructing the government. The arrangement made with Gulab Singh, according to Kohli, was in keeping with 'the long-term project envisaged by Lord Ellenborough, and implemented by his successor'.³

Fauja Singh argued cogently that the Sikhs fought the war of 1845-46 'to save the independence of their kingdom'. He outlined the growth of Khalsa nationalism, and emphasized that the creation of a disciplined force of the Khalsa by Maharaja Ranjit Singh was an important contribution to Khalsa nationalism. The commonality, as distinct from royalty and nobility, was represented by the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The external danger and internal deterioration called forth 'the national sentiments of the Khalsa army'. The Panchayats of the Khalsa army were prepared for the worst but they were not eager for war. The long apprehended invasion of the British took place in December 1845. The insincere and treacherous role of the Sikh commanders was known to Lord Gough when he wrote to the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel: 'Certain it is that there would have been a different story to tell if the body of men had not been commanded by traitors'. The spirit of self-sacrifice and the fervour of the Khalsa could be explained only on the premise that they were fighting for the independence of their national state.⁴

Anil Chandra Banerjee in his article, 'The Sikh War of Independence', talks primarily of the Sikh political struggle up to establishment of Sikh rule in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. However, he looks upon the Sikh wars of the 1840s as a part of this struggle. For him, the monarchical system established by Ranjit Singh was a kind of 'aberration' from the polity of the late eighteenth century. However, the monarchy could not liquidate the spirit which the Sikh people had inherited from the past. When the political system organized by Ranjit Singh broke down, the Sikh soldiers realized the gravity of the situation and an unerring instinct led them to the conclusion that the Khalsa alone could save the Sikh State. The old democratic tradition was revived. The army, organized in *panchayats*, assumed charge of affairs. The common people, through the army, stood against betrayal of the Sikh Commonwealth by its corrupt leaders. They were not strong enough to resist British imperialism and the selfish aristocracy. But their desperate effort proclaimed the survival of the essence of Sikhism, even though the Sikh State fell into the grasp of an alien power.⁵

3. Ibid., pp. 98-120. For the views of Ellenborough and Hardinge, see also Ganda Singh, *The British Occupation of the Punjab*, Patiala: Sikh History Society, 1955, pp. 45-52.

4. Fauja Singh, 'Khalsajis Powerful Bid to Save the Independence of their Kingdom in 1845-46', *The Panjab Past and Present*, vol. XV, part I, April 1981, pp. 141-68.

5. Anil Chandra Banerjee, 'The Sikh War of Independence', *The Panjab Past and Present*, vol. XIV, part I, April 1980, pp. 63-72.

Seen in this perspective, the evidence of contemporary Europeans, like Captain Mouton, Robert Needham Cust, Major W.L. M'Gregor, Major G.C. Smyth, and Captain J.D. Cunningham, all of whom were directly associated with the first Sikh War, appears to support the view that this war was fought by the Khalsa to save their sovereign state from extinction.

Captain Mouton, a French commander of the regular Sikh cavalry, refers to Major Broadfoot as 'a turbulent and a restless spirit' who did not care for 'the rights of other nations'. His abrasive attitude irritated the army of Lahore. Raja Lal Singh acted upon the suggestion of Captain Nicholson to get 25,000 men defeated by the British Commander-in-Chief so that the rest of the army should re-cross the river in disorder. 'This treason saved the English from a sure defeat'. 'The regular battalions having recovered a little after their recent defeats, asked again to be led towards the enemy'. The army crossed over to the left bank again. In the thick of the battle, Tej Singh, the Sikh General-in-Chief, fled away and the battle 'was lost after a hard fight'. The British Governor-General imposed 'a disgraceful treaty on the country'. Had there been no treason 'a campaign of one month would have lead us to Delhi'. It was shameful for 'all those who enriched by the great King (Maharaja Ranjit Singh) or his successors, preferred dishonour and the breaking up of the Kingdom to a glorious war and the sharing of its perils'. Captain Mouton identifies himself with the Sikh army and refers to the war of 1845-46 as 'the war of independence'.⁶

Robert Needham Cust, Assistant to the Agent to the Governor-General, Colonel Richmond, talks of 'the first British invasion of the independent kingdom of the Panjab, and the capture of Lahore'. On 18 December 1845 just before the action at Mudki, the Governor-General (Lord Hardinge) remarked: 'Will the people of England consider this an actual invasion of our frontier, and a justification of war?' He was neither sure that the army of Lahore had invaded the British territory (because they were still in the territory that belonged to the rulers of Lahore) nor was he certain that this plea would convince the British Parliament. Referring to the dead body of Major Broadfoot after the battle of Ferozshah (Pherushahr), Cust says: 'there lay he, prime mover, by many considered the cause, of this war'. After the war, total annexation of the whole country was considered but rejected, it involved the necessity of increase in the army, the exposure of the troops to the inclemency of the season, and the outcry at home against aggression. Therefore, the Government seemed to take a middle course of leaving the Maharaja to form as good a government as the situation would permit with a reduced territory and a smaller army. The Kingdom of Lahore was most likely to disintegrate.⁷

W.L. M'Gregor's *The History of the Sikhs*, appears to justify the official

6. 'The First Anglo Sikh War (1845-46)', *The Panjab Past and Present*, vol. XV, part 1, April 1981, pp. 116-27.
7. Robert Needham Cust, 'History of the Conquest of the Panjab', *The Panjab Past and Present*, vol. XIII, part I, April 1979, pp. 73, 84-85, 92, 114, 117.

policy of expansion. After the war, the Sikh State was entirely in the hands of the paramount power which kept the semblance of a government 'to keep possession of the advantages already gained, until the season of the year shall enable the Governor-General to annex the whole country to the British possessions'. M'Gregor was convinced that 'sooner or later the day must come when the British standards will be again unfurled, and the Indus, and not the Beas become the frontier barrier of her possessions in the east'. He talks of 'the measures to be adopted, in case it becomes necessary for the British to subjugate the whole of the Punjab'. M'Gregor argued that annexation was inevitable. 'Let us then be prepared for the emergency'. Acquisition of the Punjab, with the Indus forming the boundary on the west, would no doubt tend to consolidate 'our vast empire'. Thus, M'Gregor was candid in his unqualified advocacy of total annexation.⁸

Major G. Carmichael Smyth dedicated his *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* to the memory of Major Broadfoot on whose suggestion he had thought of writing it. Smyth was not in favour of 'half measures'. The Sikhs had made no 'unprovoked attack, nor had the British shown 'great forbearance' towards them. He argued that the treaty of 1809 had become 'null and void' when the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej. There was no treaty to violate. In any case, Nau Nihal Singh was the last legitimate descendant of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the British should have adopted a coercive policy on his death. For his assertion that there was no genuine descendant of Maharaja Ranjit Singh after Nau Nihal Singh, Smyth invoked the evidence of Captain Gardener who was more categorical on this point than Henry Prinsep in his book on Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Smyth's essential argument was that it was not in British interest to have a weak and unstable state as a buffer. There was every justification for its annexation.⁹

J.D. Cunningham discussed the causes of the war at some length. Among other things, the Sikh soldiers considered that they were about to enter upon 'a war purely defensive, and they were inspired to fight against the British to preserve their 'national' independence. Their relationship with the government had changed before the end of 1841: they were no longer the willing instruments of an arbitrary government but 'the representative body of the Sikh people'. As a rule the troops were obedient to their appointed officers in their ordinary duties 'but the position of a regiment, of a brigade, of a division, or of the whole army, relatively to the executive government of the country, was determined by a committee or assemblage of committees', called Panchayat. Notwithstanding all the defects of the Panchayats, 'the Sikh people' were enabled through them to interfere with effect 'in the nomination and in the removal of their rulers'. The Sikh soldiery, rather than the Sikh royalty or Sikh aristocracy, was the true representative of the

8. W.L. M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2007, rpt., pp. 256, 264-65, 270, 274.

9. G. Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, Patiala: Punjab Languages Department, 1970, rpt., pp. xxi-xxiii, xxx. For the speech of Sir Charles Napier, see Ganda Singh, *The British Occupation of the Punjab*, p. 66.

Sikh people.¹⁰

The policy pursued by the English for several years was not well calculated to ensure pacific relations. They could not, therefore, 'be held wholly blameless for a war which they expected and deprecated, and which they knew could only tend to their own aggrandizement'. Furthermore, the English misunderstood the spirit of the Khalsa. The unity and depth of feeling, derived from a young and fervid faith, were hardly recognized. The English mistook the form which the long-expected aggressions of the Sikhs would assume. They continued to believe that a desultory warfare would sooner or later ensue, which would require the British to interfere, and which they would do at their own convenience.¹¹

The War for Liberation (1848-49)

The Treaty of Bhyrowal ratified by Maharaja Dalip Singh and Lord Hardinge on 24 December 1846 showed that the British had no intention of leaving the Punjab. Sita Ram Kohli describes in some detail how Hardinge gained this objective through the machinations of Henry Lawrence and John Lawrence. Now, a Council of Regency was to function in consultation with the British Resident 'who shall have full authority to direct and control the duties of every department'. A British force was to remain in Lahore 'for the protection of the Maharaja, and the preservation of the peace of the country'. For the maintenance of the Maharani (Jind Kaur), Rs 1,50,000 a year were to be placed at her disposal. These arrangements were to end on 4 September 1854 at the latest when Maharaja Dalip Singh would attain the age of 16 years. In the new arrangement the Regent (Maharani Jind Kaur) was made redundant. She was first removed from Lahore in August 1847 and then from the Punjab in May 1848.¹²

As Resident in the Punjab, Sir Henry Lawrence introduced 'reforms' in the administration to strengthen British position in the State. John Lawrence, as acting Resident, introduced further 'reforms'. All these measures resulted in transferring administration of the country from the hands of the Darbar to 'our own', and to 'a much greater extent than was contemplated when the introduction of the new arrangement was determined'. The conduct of all details in every department, except accounts, devolved on the Resident. The measures of the Lawrence brothers, especially of John Lawrence, were a source of resentment among certain sections of the people of the Punjab.¹³

On 19 April 1848, Diwan Mul Raj, the Governor of Multan, was persuaded by his soldiers to lead their revolt. Kohli narrates the events from 19 April to 14 September 1848 in connection with the rising at Multan. John Lawrence was in favour of prompt action. But Lord Dalhousie had a very different view. He made it very clear that he was determined to exact 'national reparation' from the State

10. Joseph Davey Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2003, rpt., pp. 280-81, 245-46.

11. Ibid., pp. 293-97.

12. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, pp. 126-35.

13. Ibid., pp. 135-40.

of Lahore. The Commander-in-Chief and the Resident accepted the long-term view of the Governor-General that no 'rightful opportunities' of acquiring territories or revenues should be lost. The message went across to the British officers that the State of Lahore was to be subverted. On 4 September 1848, General Whish issued a proclamation, inviting the people and the garrison of Multan to surrender within 24 hours, 'in honour of her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain, and her ally, the Maharaja Dalip Singh'. Otherwise, in obedience to the order of the supreme Government of India, he would commence hostilities on a scale that would ensure early destruction of the rebel and his adherents. At this critical juncture, Raja Sher Singh decided to withdraw his support from the British. Early on 14 September he gave orders to break up the camp, and 5,000 veteran Sikhs moved to join Mul Raj. On 9 October then he left Multan to join his father, Sardar Chattar Singh Atariwala, the Governor of Hazara, who had taken up arms against the British.¹⁴

Sardar Chattar Singh had been removed from office and his *jagir* confiscated due primarily to the aggressive attitude of Major James Abbott, the political adviser at Hazara. On 20 August, Sardar Chattar Singh offered his prayers and vowed in the presence of *Guru Granth Sahib* that his head was dedicated to God and his arms to the service of the Khalsa. He could turn for support to the Khalsa army and the disbanded soldiery. He wrote to his son, Raja Sher Singh, that he had nothing to do with the treaty with the English and that he wished to preserve his existence and 'the religion of our country'. He asked Sher Singh to join him. Raja Sher Singh joined his father. On 18 November 1848 the Resident issued a proclamation to the effect that 'all insurgents' would meet 'full punishment' but not those people who would remain faithful in their obedience to Maharaja Dalip Singh. This proclamation was meant to counteract the propaganda of 'the United Khalsa', the loyal and obedient subjects of Maharaja Dalip Singh. In their declaration, the object of the British Government was 'the wholesale extermination of the Sikhs indiscriminately, and the suppression of the Khalsa religion'. The insurgent leaders were gaining the sympathies of many and extensive additions to their ranks.¹⁵

After the engagement at Ram Nagar on 22 November, in which the British had suffered much loss, Raja Sher Singh sent a note, offering to stop hostilities if the British promised to get out of Lahore. After the battle of Chillianwala on 13 January 1849, in which the British had suffered the worst defeat since their occupation of India, Raja Sher Singh again sent a proposal for settlement, asking for the reinstatement of Dalip Singh and the evacuation of Lahore by the British forces. After the battle of Gujrat on 21 February, the British insisted on unconditional surrender and both the Atariwala Sardars gave up their weapons to General Gilbert near Rawalpindi on 14 March. Reluctantly, the old Khalsa veterans surrendered their arms. One greybeard put down his gun with the remark: 'Today

14. Ibid., pp. 141-57.

15. Ibid., pp. 158-71.

Ranjit Singh has died'.¹⁶

On 29 March 1849, Sir Henry Elliot, accomplished the task of 'annexation or more precisely of confiscation' of the Punjab as commissioned by Lord Dalhousie. On 30 March Dalhousie prayed to God 'with a clear conscience' to prosper his work. He was not troubled by any doubt 'as to the justice or necessity of the deed'. Long before the battles of Chillianwala and Gujrat, Dalhousie had made up his mind to put an end to the Sikh rule in the Punjab. Ironically, he wanted to confiscate the kingdom of Dalip Singh with his consent and the consent of the Council of Regency. Kohli describes the manner in which Elliot managed this delicate and difficult affair. Kohli's comment reflects his feeling about the farcical transaction: 'That the destiny of a ruling Prince and of his twenty million subjects should have been decided by four of his timid and selfish councillors and this too, within the brief space of two hours, is one of the very grim facts of history'. 'Raja Tej Singh and Co.' took less time in making over to the British the fortunes of the two crores of people of the Punjab than the deal between a shepherd and a butcher 'over the sale of a flock of sheep'.¹⁷

Kohli does not accept the view that measure Dalhousie's was consistent with justice and equity. He refers to the Treaty of Bhyrowal, the clarification made by Lord Hardinge in October 1847, and the report of Sir Henry Lawrence on the practical working of the Regency Council to underline that the position of Maharaja Dalip Singh and the Governor-General was that of a 'ward' and a 'guardian', that of 'the protected' and 'a protector'. Especially after the banishment of Maharani Jind Kaur, the minor Maharaja came to be an entire responsibility of the British Resident. 'This responsibility implied above all, the protection of the Prince's person and the preservation of peace in his kingdom. The act of annexation denied the very basis of this position'. Treaties were made by the British with the Sikh Government and not with any individual Sardar or chieftain. Lord Dalhousie's action was wrong, unjust, and uncalled for. The real reason for this ruthless policy was his belief that 'the integrity of the British Indian Empire required that course of action'. In other words, his conscience could be clear about the 'necessity' but not the 'justice' of confiscation. In any case, it fell within the long-range policy of the British after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹⁸

Then there was the question of the cause for which the 'rebels' were fighting. The professed aim of Diwan Mul Raj and Raja Sher Singh was to get rid of British domination in the Punjab and to restore the independence of the Sikh Maharaja or the Sikh State. They were supported by a number of Sikh Sardars, the Sikh, Hindu and Muslim officers of the army, the Sikh soldiery, the ruling Amir of Afghanistan, and the *wazir* of Nurpur. From amongst the people of the Punjab, Kohli refers to the disbanded soldiers of the Khalsa army who actually joined the rebels, the rabble of Multan, who killed Agnew and Anderson, and the

16. Ibid., pp. 172-79.

17. Ibid., pp. 179-83.

18. Ibid., pp. 183-91.

citizens of Lahore who were resentful of the British presence. A more important civilian mentioned by Kohli was the Sikh religious leader Bhai Maharaj Singh who had done anti-British propaganda among the disbanded Khalsa soldiers from the very beginning of the outbreak at Multan.¹⁹

Edward Joseph Thackwell, the late Aide-De-Camp to Major-General Sir Joseph Thackwell, wrote a narrative of the Sikh war of 1848-49 in 1850. He makes casual references to the attitude of the people of the Punjab. He mentions Bhai Maharaj Singh as an exception to the chiefs who agreed to surrender. On his way from Ferozepur to Lahore he noticed 'lawless men' bending their steps northwards, 'intent on swelling the Khalsa army'. Many of the disbanded men from the Bengal infantry regiments, which had been considerably reduced by Lord Hardinge, flocked to the Sikh standard in the hope of bettering their condition. The natives of Lahore showed a kind of effrontery that could not be described. Even to the time of the victory of Gujrat they openly remarked on passing any British ladies that 'they should soon be shutting them up in their *Zenanas*'. Thackwell recorded a more important dimension of the war. After the battle of Gujrat, when Raja Sher Singh was being escorted by some of his Bannu infantry to the camp of General Thackwell on the other side of the river, 'all the privates of the European regiments flocked out of their lines to catch a glimpse of them. On the left bank, the whole of Lord Gough's camp turned out to feast their eyes with the sight of men who had displayed so much resolution and military skill'. Thackwell's comment on the immediate future may be noted: 'That the Sikhs will ever love our rule, or lose that patriotic spirit which now consumes them, is most improbable'. He added: 'if a formidable insurrection should ever take place in India', it would mainly be attributable to 'the element of disaffection now blended with the subject mass'.²⁰

Bhai Maharaj Singh (1849-56)

Bhai Maharaj Singh, who symbolized the war for liberation, continued his efforts after the annexation. Two major historians of the time took notice of Bhai Maharaj Singh as an important individual thoroughly opposed to the British: Sohan Lal Suri and Ganesh Das.²¹ Significantly, they did not show any appreciation or sympathy for him because of their identification with the authorities, the English Sahibs.¹ The British administrators took notice of Bhai Maharaj Singh precisely because he was opposed to the British and their presence in the Punjab. He came to the notice of Henry Lawrence in connection with the Prema conspiracy case in June 1847. His activities in the Majha and Multan in 1847-48 were closely watched by the authorities with the idea of his arrest. His participation in the battles of the Sikh war of 1848-49 was known to the British administrators. His activities after the annexation of the Lahore State led to his capture towards the end of 1849. Deported to Singapore before the middle of 1850, he died in Singapore Jail six

19. Ibid., p. 163.

20. Edward Joseph Thackwell, *Narrative of the Second Sikh War* [first published in 1851], Patiala: Punjab Languages Department, 1970, rpt., pp. 7, 14, 58, 123, 125, 140.

years later.

Henry Lawrence wrote to the Governor-General on 1 June 1847 that Prema was persistent that Bhai Maharaj Singh had told him to kill Diwan Dina Nath, Sardar Tej Singh, and Sardar Sher Singh, in the first instance, and to follow all orders of the Maharani. Her *munshi*, Buta Singh, had met Prema thrice with her messages. Buta Singh denied this, but Sardar Tej Singh, Sardar Lehna Singh, Sardar Attar Singh, and Diwan Dina Nath felt sure that Prema had met Buta Singh who had been sent by the Maharani. Bhai Maharaj Singh, according to Lawrence, was an influential Sikh preacher living in Amritsar. Many reports of his suspicious conduct had reached Lawrence. The Maharani was known to be opposed to the administration established by the Resident. Her scheme was probably to remove her personal enemies to 'take her chance of better luck' with a new administration. 'Bhai Maharaj Singh and his like 'would be enticed' into her scheme of 'a crusade' against the British.²² Thus, Henry Lawrence suspected that Prema's plot was a part of some larger scheme against the British.

The *thanedar* of Amritsar, Jaimal Singh was ordered to bring Bhai Maharaj Singh for questioning. He reported that he had gone to the house of Bhai Maharaj Singh with 50 sepoys on 15 June 1847 but he was not to be found there. It was suspected that Jiwan Singh, the officer in charge of the guard, had allowed him to escape. Jiwan Singh was immediately confined. The house and property of Bhai Maharaj Singh were ordered to be confiscated, and a reward of Rs. 1,000 was offered for his apprehension. The Sardars told the Maharani that it would be difficult to apprehend him. On 21 June, Baba Lachhman Singh reported that Bhai Maharaj Singh had stayed for some time in the village Hudhara. Its *zamindars* were seized and sent to Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia for examination. On the day following, 100 horsemen were sent into the Majha to search for Bhai Maharaj Singh. His property was auctioned at Rs. 6,000, and 55 of his cows and buffaloes were given to the Akalis and Granthis of Gurdwara Shahidganj.²³

Dalhousie recalled that measures were taken against Bhai Maharaj Singh in April 1849 when he was rousing the country in the Rachna Doab with some thousand men. On 8 June 1848, Captain Abbott, Assistant Resident at Hazara, received a note from Major Napier about the unsuccessful efforts to capture Bhai Maharaj Singh. Abbott had strongly urged the importance of his immediate seizure in February. 'What was easy then has proved impossible since the revolt in Multan'. He added: 'the escape of this robber, whom the army are anxious to canonize, will, I fear, strengthen the cause of the insurgents'.²⁴

21. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, Daftir V, tr., V.S. Suri, Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 2002, pp. 39, 135, 156, 158, 160, 169, 170, 172, 179, 181, 268. Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh i-Punjab*, ed. Kirpal Singh, Amritsar: Khalsa College, 1965, pp. 387, 291.

22. *Documents Relating to Bhai Maharaj Singh*, ed. Nahar Singh, Ludhiana: Gurdwara Karamsar, 1968, pp. 1-2.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 37.

On 3 July 1848, Dalhousie wrote to the Secret Committee that Diwan Mul Raj was becoming more determined in rebellion as his cause was becoming more desperate. Dalhousie was misinformed that Bhai Maharaj Singh had been drowned on his way to Multan. Therefore, he talked of the 'destruction' of the outlaw, Guru Bhai Maharaj Singh; the utter discomfiture of his followers was bound to have 'the effect of disheartening the rebels'. But, Bhai Maharaj Singh had managed to reach Multan. Donald F. McLeod, the Commissioner of Jullundur, stated on 11 October 1850 with firm evidence provided by a number of Bhai Maharaj Singh's followers, that he was at Parmanand, a notable village not far from Dina Nagar, at the breaking out of the rebellion at Multan. After repeated entreaties from Mul Raj, he had set out with a few followers; the number increased to about 900 on the way to Multan. On his arrival at Multan, he established himself near the Huzuri Bagh. Mul Raj visited him immediately and presented 40 gold *mohars*. Bhai Maharaj Singh reproached him for not paying his troops regularly and well. Dissatisfied with the state of affairs, he left Multan after 7 or 8 days with the impression that it would fall.²⁵ Its geographical situation was not good for a war of liberation.

Bhai Maharaj Singh set out from Multan with a few followers towards Malwa through Pakpattan. Passing through Muktsar, Anandpur, Jawalamukhi and Kangra, he travelled along the foothills and reached Rawalpindi. He communicated with Sardar Chattar Singh Attariwala, and toured in the Sindh Sagar and Chaj Doabs where the armies then were assembled. Hundreds of persons thronged his route everywhere. 'There he appears to have constantly ridden about, between the armies quite fearless of exposure and enjoining the Sikhs to be firm and courageous'. He was present at the battles of Chillianwala and Gujrat, and accompanied the retreating army to Rawalpindi 'where he strongly urged the chiefs to fight another battle, either there or at Panjah Sahib'. The only one who supported him on this point was Bedi Bikrama Singh. Disappointed with the attitude of the chiefs, he left secretly either quite alone or with only one or two followers.²⁶

The *Hoshiarpur District Gazetteer* of 1883-84 refers to the horrible holocaust at Naurangabad in which Bhai Bir Singh was killed, and after which Bhai Maharaj Singh was installed as his successor. Baba Bikrama Singh Bedi, son of Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, was also baptized at the hands of Bhai Bir Singh. Therefore, Bhai Maharaj Singh and Baba Bikrama Singh were followers of the same Guru (Gur-Bhai). During the campaigns of 1848-49, Bhai Maharaj Singh, Baba Bikrama Singh, three sons of Sodhi Udham Singh of Anandpur and two sons of Sodhi Issar Singh of Hajipur declared 'a holy war' against the British. Along with their followers, they all joined Sardar Chattar Singh and Raja Sher Singh and fought valiantly, exhorting the Khalsa to destroy the bloody British (*firangi mlechh*). After the general surrender, the Bedi and Sodhi *sahibzadas* laid down their arms, but Bhai

25. Ibid., pp. 16, 269-70. See also the statements of Nihal Singh on page 251, Nanu Singh on page 253, and Mohan Singh on page 254.

26. Ibid., pp. 270-71.

Maharaj Singh went towards Jammu and started working for 'a people's rising against the British political domination over the land of the five rivers and the Sikh Gurus'.²⁷

While the war was in progress, Bhai Maharaj Singh was engaged in laying stores of grain for himself and his followers in the Jammu country. After leaving the Khalsa army at Rawalpindi, Bhai Maharaj Singh went to Devi Batala in the Jammu territory. After two or three weeks he went to Chumbi which served as his headquarters for some months. With the help of Ram Das, the *wazir* of Raja Suchet Singh's widow, Bhai Maharaj Singh planned to take the fort of Ram Nagar. Jawahar Singh of Sarhali collected about 400 men from the Majha for this purpose. Mian Ranbir Singh, as the Governor of Jammu, got timely intelligence, and he seized Ram Das. A number of the Majha men were also caught. They were released later but Bhai Maharaj Singh and his party were asked to leave Chumbi.²⁸

Bhai Maharaj Singh moved to Sojuwal in Batala district in July and stayed there till October 1849. A plan projected at Chumbi was carried out at Sojuwal. Maharaja Dalip Singh was to be carried off before he was removed from Lahore. The principal accomplices in this project were caught but some of them made their escape. Bhai Maharaj Singh had given Rs. 1,000 for the purpose, and a man named Ganeshi Mian at Lahore was stated to have been employed by the conspirators. The emissaries of Bhai Maharaj Singh were apprehended. One of them was Ram Singh Sadh who presided over the meetings in a *dharamsala*, another was his servant; and five of them were old Sikh soldiers.²⁹

From Sojuwal Bhai Maharaj Singh went to Kaleran. As at other places, a number of persons came to see him at Kaleran. Arrangements for travel in the Jalandhar Doab were completed, the project for attacking the cantonments was discussed, and the route to be followed was decided upon. Crossing the Beas, Bhai Maharaj Singh visited Kishupur and went to Kurala. Here he got the message that the scheme for carrying off the young Maharaja had failed. From Kurala Bhai Maharaj Singh went to Hoshiarpur where he inspected the cantonments, both of the line and of the Sikh Regiment, and met some of the Sikh commissioned officers. During his stay at Hoshiarpur he visited Bajwara which was supposed to have a buried treasure. He moved to Kammuwal with Sadh Kirpa Ram who promised to supply 4,000 men. From there he went to Kandola, close to the Baoli where Bhai Maharaj Singh was to take shelter sometime later.³⁰

On 3 or 4 December 1849 Bhai Maharaj Singh reached Sham Chaurasi which belonged to Muslim Rajputs who had no sympathy with his cause. Nevertheless the most important meeting was held there. The *Granth Sahib* was sent for (presumably for a *vak*) and it was declared that the twentieth day of the month of Poh was the propitious day for attack on the cantonments. After this

27. Ibid., pp. 61-62.

28. Ibid., pp. 271-72.

29. Ibid., pp. 128-29, 272-73.

30. Ibid., pp. 273-82.

meeting, Bhai Maharaj Singh went to Garhdiwala, Tanda and Zahura, crossed the Beas at Srigobindpur Ghat into the Bari Doab, and recrossed the river to return to Kandola and to stay at the Baoli.³¹

Henry Vansittart, the Deputy Commissioner of Jullundur, wrote to the Commissioner McLeod that one of the spies, set on the track of Bhai Maharaj Singh, informed him that he knew the place where Bhai Maharaj Singh was on 28 December 1849. Within ten minutes, Vansittart was on the road with the *kotwal* and 20 horsemen. He reached Adampur with only 10 horsemen, but after a two-minute breather he moved on. The enclosure where Bhai Maharaj Singh was known to be staying for the night was encircled. Vansittart saw a man with a weapon glittering in the moonlight and fired his pistol. Before long all the twenty-one persons with Maharaj Singh were seized and bound. The man whom Vansittart had wounded with a pistol shot was carrying an axe with a long handle, and not a spear.³² His name was Amir Singh and he died later in hospital.

Guru Maharaj Singh was not 'an ordinary man', wrote Vansittart to McLeod on 30 December 1849. 'He is to the Natives what Jesus Christ is to the most zealous Christians'. When Maharaj Singh and his companions were led into the jail, some of the Sikh Guard bowed themselves down. During the whole day, numbers of Hindus had been gathering round the jail to cast an eye on the building in which he was confined. Vansittart was emphatic that Jullundur was no safe place of custody for the Guru; the most unsafe of all guards were men from the Sikh Battalion without the immediate surveillance of a European officer. Vansittart had no wish to lay stress on the importance of the man but he could not contend against 'the religious fanaticism of a whole country, nor against the united wealth of a great nation'. If Maharaj Singh were to escape, it would have been ten thousand times better that he had never been captured. Vansittart wrote to Major Palmer on the same day that he distrusted the Sikh Guard absolutely. Captain Turner wrote to Vansittart that by keeping the Guru here 'you subject the fidelity of the Sikh Regiment, to a most bitter, and as far as I can see an undesirable test'.³³

On 2 January 1850, McLeod wrote to the officiating secretary to the Board of Administration, P. Melvill, that at the joint desire of Vansittart and Captain Turner. Guru Maharaj Singh and his disciple had been removed to the cantonments where they were under a Guard of Europeans. Melvill wrote to McLeod on the day following that the Guru be immediately put in irons. On 5 January, Melvill wrote to H.M Elliot, Secretary to Government with the Governor-General that the Board of Administration requested for the early orders of the Governor-General, as to the punishment of the Guru, adding that 'they would send him at once beyond seas and avoid the excitement of a trial and the risk of bringing him to Lahore'. On 13 January, the Governor-General wrote a Minute, appreciating the wisdom of the

31. Ibid., pp. 282-86.

32. Ibid., pp. 88-90.

33. Ibid., pp. 91-94, 96.

Board of Administration. 'I should myself have desired', he wrote, 'that so mischievous and so bold a traitor should be at once brought to trial, and, if convicted, should be subjected to the heaviest penalty which public law can inflict'. He acceded to the wish of the Board that Bhai Maharaj Singh should be removed from the jurisdiction of the Board. He should be identified with certainty and removed at once to Allahabad, and then conveyed to Calcutta. On 9 February 1850, Melvill wrote to Elliot that Guru Bhai Maharaj Singh and his disciple Kharak Singh had been despatched from Jullundur towards Ambala under a suitable escort on 30 January.³⁴ Thus, the Punjab bureaucracy took only a month after the capture of Bhai Maharaj Singh to get rid of him and to obviate the prospect of a general uprising.

In his long report of 11 October 1850, Donald McLeod made the following observation:

It is, I think, impossible to regard without feelings of astonishment, the spirit of bold and reckless daring, as well as the devotion to his person, evinced by the followers of the Gooroo nor can it be doubted, in my opinion that had he remained at large, but a little while longer one or more outrages of an alarming character would have been attempted, by at least some hundreds men actuated by a spirit of fierce resolution and indifference to life the result of which, even though more or less unsuccessful, as they must have been, it would perhaps be impossible to foretell.

McLeod goes on to add that the schemes thought of were rather wild, and the character of the movement was exclusively Sikh. Nevertheless, Bhai Maharaj Singh was 'in some respects a very remarkable man'. He showed great sagacity and self-reliance, and his intentions were fully known only to him. He evinced an uncommon aptitude for forming general plans and having these carried out simultaneously by different agents, acting independently. 'That he possessed also, in an eminent degree, the quality of moral courage, there can be no doubt'. He was held in great veneration due to the sacred character of a Guru. There was a general sympathy for him but 'the spirit of the Punjab was effectually broken'.³⁵

Before Bhai Maharaj Singh reached Calcutta, Dalhousie had ordered on 22 March 1850 that, whereas Mul Raj could be kept in Calcutta due to his ill health, there was no such risk in the case of Bhai Maharaj Singh. He would not be endangered by the voyage. On 27 March a letter from the Foreign Department was sent to Colonel G. Warren, that Mul Raj and Bhai Maharaj Singh would soon reach Calcutta. As soon as an opportunity could be found, it was intended to despatch the Bhai and his disciple Kharak Singh to Singapore. On 3 May the Superintendent of Marine was authorized to engage a passage to Singapore for Bhai Maharaj Singh and Kharak Singh in the ship *Mohamed Shaw*. On 9 May it

34. Ibid., pp. 104-6, 109-10, 113-14, 131.

35. Ibid., pp. 286-90, 296.

was ordered to remove the irons from the prisoners as soon as the vessel was left by the pilot at sea, and to transfer them to the custody of the authorities at Singapore without irons. On 9 June, the State prisoners reached Singapore and they were lodged in one of the upper rooms of the New jail.³⁶

On 24 January 1851, the Governor of P.W. Islands, Singapore and Malacca wrote to Secretary to the Government of India that Kharak Singh was refusing his food, tearing the clothes off his own back, and throwing things at the head of the keeper of the jail. He was also 'disrespectful and offensive' to the Resident Councillor. Bhai Maharaj Singh, on the contrary, expressed his satisfaction with everything that was given to him. On 1 July 1853 the Resident Councillor, Hon'ble T. Church, was informed that Maharaj Singh complained frequently of pain and swelling of his feet and ankles, and that he was now all but blind from milky cataract in both eyes. However, he ate well and he was generally cheerful. Kharak Singh was now well and more contented than he generally was.³⁷

In August 1853, the Resident Councillor sent two letters, one each from Bhai Maharaj Singh and Kharak Singh, to be transmitted to Naurangabad in the Punjab. The Governor-General forwarded these letters to John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, to know his opinion, but with the observation that the Governor-General in Council was 'rather averse to any letters being sent by the Gooroo'.³⁸

On 1 July 1856, the Assistant Surgeon, J. Cowper, wrote to the Resident Councillor, Singapore, that Kharak Singh had no complaint and was in excellent health. But the health of Maharaj Singh during the past two months had been very much impaired. A cancerous sore had been formed on the left side of his tongue, which at times caused considerable loss of blood. The glands on the same side of the neck had become swollen and contusive. He had eaten very little for two or three weeks, and on several days he had taken only a little *kanji* and water. Cowper recommended that both prisoners might be allowed a little more freedom for the benefit of the change of air. Maharaj Singh was in a very delicate state. Cowper recommended that he be allowed a drive for a few miles into the country twice or thrice a week. The Resident Councillor was prepared to allow this, pending a reference to the Government of India on the subject.³⁹ However, Bhai Maharaj Singh had no time for these little mercies. He died on 5 July 1856.

Maharani Jind Kaur (1848-63)

On 16 May 1848, a proclamation was issued from Lahore in Persian, giving an elaborate explanation of why it had become necessary to remove Maharani

36. Ibid., pp. 142-44, 152, 161-62.

37. Ibid., pp. 190, 193-94.

38. Ibid., pp. 196-97.

39. Ibid., pp. 200, 201.

Jind Kaur from Ferozepur to Benares.⁴⁰ On 23 May, she was sent to Benares, and detained there under the personal supervision of Major M'Gregor. On 25 May, the Resident wrote to the Governor-General that the Khalsa soldiery in the camp of Raja Sher Singh was much disturbed on hearing of the removal of the Maharani. They said that she was 'the mother of all the Khalsa'. They had no inducement to oppose Mul Raj. If he came to attack them, they would seize the Sardars and go over to him. That the Maharani loomed large in the imagination of the Khalsa as the symbol of Sikh honour is also evident from the importance given to her later in the manifesto of Raja Sher Singh: the British had broken, it said, the treaty with Maharaja Ranjit Singh by imprisoning and sending the Maharani, 'the mother of her people', away to Hindustan.⁴¹

In October 1848 Maharani Jind Kaur engaged an English lawyer who drafted a petition for the Governor-General against her unlawful confinement, and asking for an increase of Rs. 250 in her monthly allowance, a sum of Rs. 500 for winter clothing, and Rs. 500 a month for retaining a *vakil*. Major M'Gregor remarked that the money added to her monthly allowance would be applied to some 'improper purpose'. The Governor-General accepted his 'advice' and told the Maharani to live within the income provided by the Lahore Darbar. Her appeal for a fair trial was also rejected. On 31 January 1849, Dalhousie wrote to Brigadier Mountain that the demand for the Maharani's return to the Punjab should never be acceded to. She alone had a 'manly understanding in the Punjab, and her restoration would furnish the only thing which is wanting to render the present movement truly formidable, namely, an object and a head'. Dalhousie ended his letter with an air of finality: 'Trust me this is no time for going back or giving back or winking an eyelid'.⁴²

After the battles of Ramnagar and Chillianwala the Maharani appreciated Raja Sher Singh's role. 'A hundred praises on your gallantry', she wrote in a letter received at Rawalpindi on 8 March 1849. She advised Raja Sher Singh to use both persuasion and violence to oppose the *mlechh* with their own weapons. If he was in want of money, Jai Singh knew the house in Sheikhpura outside which a crore and sixty lacs of rupees were lying in a well. She wrote emphatically: 'I shall return to you'. Dalhousie wrote to John Hobhouse on 24 March that letters from the Maharani addressed to Sardar Chattar Singh and Diwan Mul Raj had been captured from a horseman. If these were found to be authentic, Dalhousie was inclined to confiscate all her property and confine her in the fort of Chunar. Early in April, Major M'Gregor personally supervised her removal from Benares to the fort of Chunar. The Maharani was accompanied by 16 lady attendants, and a separate cell within the fort was earmarked for her.⁴³

40. Avtar Singh Gill, *Lahore Darbar and Rani Jindan*, Ludhiana: Jaswant Printers, 2006, revised and enlarged, Appendix H.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 176-78.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-80 & 80n3.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-83.

On 6 April 1849, Maharani Jind Kaur escaped from the fort of Chunar. But the discovery was made only on 19 April when a letter was found at the gate. It underlined: 'I escaped by myself unaided'. On the evening of April 6, an old lady had visited the cell of the Maharani, and she continued to visit the cell, though the Maharani had escaped on the 6th evening. On 25 May, Dalhousie wrote to Hobhouse that the Maharani had been let out by the Havildar of the Guard 'as a sempstress belonging to her establishment'. The real sempstress (*seenewali*) of the Maharani was in Benares till April 15. From Chunar, the Maharani travelled on foot, or in a boat, and reached Patna. From there, she travelled towards Nepal as a Bairagan, and entered Kathmandu on 29 April. Meanwhile, the Governor-General expressed his annoyance over her sensational escape by ordering that all her property at Benares should be confiscated, including the jewels worth 9 lacs of rupees, that her allowance should be stopped if she crossed the frontiers of British India, and that Major M'Gregor should not enter into any communication with her without previous reference to the Government of India.⁴⁴

At Kathmandu the Maharani learnt that the armed struggle for retaining the Sikh State had failed. The British Resident at Kathmandu informed her that all her property at Benares had been confiscated as a measure of punishment for her correspondence with Raja Sher Singh Attariwala; she was deprived of 'all right to consideration' from the Government of India for leaving the fort of Chunar and taking asylum beyond the British territory. The Governor-General was in favour of putting pressure on Rana Jang Bahadur, the Prime Minister of Nepal, and the King of Nepal to keep the Maharani in close confinement. As a result, Rana Jang Bahadur told the British Resident that the Nepal Government would take care of her security and prevent her from all 'intrigues' against the British Government.⁴⁵

Persuaded by the Maharani about her royal status, the King of Nepal agreed to give her a royal reception on 8 March 1850. The officiating British Resident, J.E. Erskine, told the Nepalese authorities on 6 March that the proposed reception was contrary to the assurances they had earlier given to the Governor-General. The reception was cancelled. In September 1850, letters sent by the Maharani to the prisoners in Allahabad Fort were apprehended. In a letter addressed to Buta Singh and Lal Singh, she had stated that she was not sitting idle. The steps she had taken with reference to the information in her possession would be explained verbally by a former personal attendant Bagha. The Maharani hoped for success through the True Guru's grace. An enquiry revealed that the Maharani's men moved regularly between Nepal and Allahabad, and they were in contact with the State prisoners in the fort of Allahabad.⁴⁶

Significantly, rolls of Hindu and Sikh soldiers serving in the British regiments posted at Allahabad, Kanpur, and Lucknow were compiled. In a letter addressed to Gurdial Singh, father of Buta Singh, he was authorized by the Maharani to

44. Ibid., pp. 184-86.

45. Ibid., pp. 186-87.

46. Ibid., pp. 188-89.

utilize all the property left at his disposal for raising a force and to keep it ready for rebellion in Peshawar. Similar instructions were given to her agents at Benares and Calcutta. The son of General Kahan Singh of Lopoke was asked to induce the people of the Majha region to rise when the insurrection broke out at Peshawar. The Maharani wrote to Raja Sher Singh that she, 'a woman', had managed to escape from the fort of Chunar. He, 'a man', could make his escape by using money. Or, he should hire men and be ready to join when the insurrection broke out. She wrote to Raja Lal Singh that he should persuade the Barakzai brothers to support her cause.⁴⁷

The Governor-General warned the State prisoners at Allahabad against any further contact with the Maharani, and instructed the Resident in Nepal to request the Nepal Government to pay serious attention to the activities of the Maharani. Rana Jang Bahadur confirmed the reports that several attempts were made by the Punjabis to contact the Maharani, and that six or seven Sikhs had been apprehended while trying to enter Nepal. The Rana met the Maharani and told her not to intrigue against the British.⁴⁸ No practical shape could be given to the intentions of the Maharani.

In April 1856 it became known that the Maharani had established contact with Maharaja Dalip Singh. Kept under the tutorship of Dr John Login at Dehra Dun, Mussourie, and Fatehgarh, the Maharaja had been admitted formally into the Christian Church on 8 March 1853 and sailed for England on 19 April 1854. A letter of the Maharaja fell into the hands of the British Resident at Kathmandu in which he had shown his inability to assist the Maharani to go to England and advised her to seek Rana Jang Bahadur's help. The Resident reported the matter to his government on 28 August 1856, pointing out that the Maharani's intention was to join her son in England. Lord Canning thought it advisable to allow the Maharani to contact her son openly, and he wrote to the Court of Directors for orders.⁴⁹

During the uprising of 1857, the Maharani made another effort to rouse the Punjabis. Her former servants Chet Singh, Jawala Singh, and Mayya carried her message to the people of the Punjab as well as the prisoners at Allahabad, urging them to rise once again against the British. Sir Richard Temple, the Commissioner of Lahore, discovered that Megh Singh and Kishan Singh who had visited the Maharani in Nepal, used 'seditious' language against the British Government. They were apprehended and severely punished. Chet Singh, according to Temple, was 'a known rebel'. He had helped the Maharani in her escape from Chunar, and visited the Punjab several times in 1857 and returned to Nepal in 1858. Chet Singh and Jawala Singh were arrested in 1859, and this led to arrests on a large scale and punishment of people in the Punjab. The Maharani expected the rulers of

47. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 189-90.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-97.

Nepal and Jammu and Kashmir to rise against the British.⁵⁰

The Secretary of State for India allowed Maharaja Dalip Singh on compassionate grounds to correspond with his mother, and to take her to England. The Private Secretary to Lord Canning forwarded the Maharaja's letter to the Maharani to Kathmandu on 8 January 1860 when the Governor-General was camping at Panipat. The Governor-General had no objection to the Maharaja visiting India. Early in February 1861, the Maharaja arrived at Calcutta. After a regulation salute of 21 guns he was welcomed by an ADC to Lord Canning on board and taken to Spence's Hotel. The men of the city flocked to the hotel in thousands, demonstrative of their joy and excitement. When the Maharaja showed up, all solemnly bowed with respect and went away. Lord Canning requested the Maharaja to give up his intention of visiting the Punjab, and he accepted the suggestion. The Maharaja and the Maharani sailed to England. A house in London was chosen for her residence. In early summer 1861, Lady Login visited the Maharani now in her forties, 'an aged, half blind woman, sitting huddled on a heap of cushions on the floor'. However, the moment she got excited, unexpected gleams revealed the sharp brain associated with 'the Messalina of the Punjab'.⁵¹

Maharaja Dalip Singh took the Mulgrave Castle on lease from Lord Normandy. The son and the mother lived there till June 1862. Then the Maharaja took a separate house for the Maharani in London and placed her under the charge of an English lady at Abingdon House in Kensington. The reason is not far to seek. Lady Login recorded that the religious feelings of Maharaja Dalip Singh at this time were 'unsettled'. At one moment he was filled with 'a sudden impulse of missionary zeal' but at another moment he was attracted by 'the most extravagant and ignorant forms of sectarianism'. A Colonel had written to John Login on 4 August 1861 that the arrival of the Maharani in England was 'a misfortune'. On 8 June 1862 John Lawrence wrote to John Login that there could be no doubt whatever that the Maharani was 'better out of India than in it', even though in England she would be 'the evil genius of the Maharaja'. It was for the Secretary of State to decide which interest was of paramount importance. The Maharaja realized that the people who mattered were in favour of his separation from her mother.⁵²

Broken health and separation from her son hastened the end of Maharani Jind Kaur. She died on 1 August 1863. On 16 February 1864 Maharaja Dalip left for India to cast her last remains on the waters of the Punjab. He was received at Bombay with a salute of 21 guns, but he was not allowed to go to the Punjab. The mortal remains of his mother were consigned to fire at Nasik, and the ashes were scattered on the waters of the Godavari.⁵³

In retrospect (1845-57)

We can see that Captain Mouton, identifying himself with the people of the

50. Ibid., pp. 190-91.

51. Ibid., pp. 197-200.

52. Ibid., pp. 201-2.

53. Ibid., pp. 203-4.

Punjab, looked at the war of 1845-46 as 'the war of independence'. Conversely, Robert Needham Cust talked of 'the first British invasion of the independent kingdom of the Punjab'. They were referring to the same situation from different perspectives. To resist the 'invasion' was to fight for 'independence'. Major M'Gregor believed in the inevitability and also the desirability of extending the British empire to the Indus. His unqualified advocacy of annexation was reinforced by Major G. Carmichael Smyth. J.D. Cunningham did not attribute a deliberate design to the British but they could not be held blameless for a war that they knew would be to their advantage. He had no doubt whatever that the Sikh soldiery thought that they were fighting a purely defensive war and the Sikh soldiery represented 'the Sikh people'.

Sita Ram Kohli marshalls contemporary evidence in support of his view that it was a well considered long-term policy of the British to annex the Kingdom of Lahore. The obvious implication of this policy was the subversion of the Punjab as a sovereign state. Significantly, a chapter of his book is entitled 'The Last Year of Freedom', the year 1845. Even more emphatically than Cunningham, Kohli refers to the Sikh soldiery as representative of the *Sarbat-Khalsa*. Fauja Singh has argued explicitly, cogently, and with a certain degree of conviction that the Khalsa fought for saving 'the independence' of the State with which they identified themselves. For A.C. Banerjee, the war of 1845-46 was an integral part of 'the Sikh war of independence'. He makes no distinction between a struggle for gaining an independent status and the defence of an independent state. Indeed, it may be argued that a struggle for freedom or war of independence presupposes subjection to an alien power. Therefore, the war of 1845-46 can certainly be conceptualized as 'a war of resistance' if not a war of independence.

After the war of 1845-46, the Kingdom of Lahore was no longer sovereign. It had become a subordinate State. If there was any doubt about this position it was removed by the Treaty of Bhyrowal before the end of 1846. Unconcerted resistance to the British had never ceased. But it became more determined when it became clear that the British had come to stay in a position of domination. In the other Indian States subordinate to British, their internal administration was in the hands of the rulers but in the Punjab, because the Maharaja was a minor, the administration of the State was virtually under British control and it was becoming stronger with the passage of time. Resentment against the British increased in proportion to the increase in their intervention in the affairs of the State. Opposition began to be organized and a situation began to develop in which the Governor-General became determined on annexation and large sections of the people of the Punjab took up arms to overthrow the British. These sections included a few independent or subordinate rulers, a number of Sardars, a large chunk of the army, the mass of the disbanded soldiery, and the people at large, not only Sikhs but also Hindus and Muslims. Therefore, the war of 1848-49 can appropriately be characterized as a war of liberation or independence.

Bhai Maharaj Singh participated in this war directly and continued to organize

an uprising against the British for the restoration of Sikh rule. He was captured before he could strike, and died in exile. Maharani Jind Kaur, had begun to stand in opposition to the British Resident after the Sikh war of 1845-46, resisting British encroachment on the government and administration of the Sikh State, and then planning their expulsion from India till 1857-58. In the last phase of her life she tried to make Maharaja Dalip Singh realize the value and importance of his ancestral heritage as a kind of revolt against Christianity and British imperialism.

COLONIAL ACCOUNTS OF THE PUNJAB IN 1857: A DECONSTRUCTION*

*Indu Banga** and J.S. Grewal****

The Punjab was among those parts of British India that are believed to have remained unaffected by the uprising of 1857. Rather, the soldiers recruited from this region, the Sikhs in particular, were instrumental in the recovery of Delhi for the British. The response of the region's population is attributed to the success of the 'Punjab School of Education', especially its agrarian policies. However, this simplistic assumption belies the complex ground realities in this newly conquered province. This is evident even from the self-congratulatory accounts of the mutiny by the Englishmen themselves who tend to underplay the covert or overt expressions of opposition to their rule.

The paper focuses on the colonialist constructions of the events of 1857, respectively by Frederic Cooper (1858) and Rev. J. Cave Browne (1861). They actually participated in the events, Cooper as the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, and Cave-Browne as the Chaplain of the Moveable Column formed at Rawalpindi. Both these works became the bases of all the later writings on the Punjab during 1857. There is little realization that the selection and interpretation of evidence by the two writers was informed by their purposes and their conscious or unconscious assumptions. Consequently, quite apart from their silences, their works contain unintended evidence on the people's initiatives and expressions of antipathy towards the British, or of sympathy with the rebels. Our basic purpose is to deconstruct these two accounts of the 1857 uprising in relation to the Punjab.

I

In 1858, Frederic Cooper, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, published his *Crisis in Punjab*, covering the phase of over four months from the outbreak at Meerut on May 10 to the fall of Delhi on 20 September 1857. His work was dedicated to the memory of Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence who had served in the Punjab as the British Resident and President of the Board of Administration before and after annexation and who had been killed by the rebels in Lucknow in 1857. An important purpose of the publication of this book was to record the commendable role of individuals during the 'crisis', bringing out excellent action,

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heroism or physical chivalry on the part of an official.¹

As a part of the Punjab administration, Cooper wished to underscore its crucial role in the situation. Not the individual officers so much as the administrative system itself was projected as the cause of their success. 'Under the Punjab system there is a recognized responsible head to each district, who originates, harmonizes, adopts, and acts. He is the authorized exponent of the political position of the Government, as well as of its laws and institutions. Hence he is referee in the first instance in every matter, domestic, social, or public'. In short, the head of the district in the Punjab enjoyed 'the reality, as well as the responsibility of power'. His vigilance, tact and influence 'could be used to good purpose in the crisis, and without fear of neutralization'.² This was the reason why the British administrators of the Punjab were able to take prompt and effective action in dealing with all rebels in the province to recover Delhi and, thereby, to save the empire, emphasizes Cooper.

'The extraordinary fidelity, loyalty, and even attachment, shown to their rulers generally by the Punjab people' are said to be an important factor in the situation. Cooper underlines that this was a result of the way in which the British ruled the Punjab. 'For ten years, a practical commentary on the difference between the Anglo-Saxon and the Sikh dynasties had been presented to the understanding of every chieftain, every land owner, every trader, every capitalist, in the Punjab. The different uses to which conquests and temporary elevations to supreme power can be put, commended itself to the appreciation of each. The fostering care of Lord Dalhousie had not been lavished in vain'. The great Sir Henry was affectionately remembered by the people and Sir John Lawrence was no less kind. Indeed, 'Lawrence' formed the ideal of 'a governing impersonation'. Consequently, 'the country of our latest, and fiercest, and most chivalrous foe, through being preserved and used more in accordance with the genius and capacity of its people, has maintained an attitude unrivalled throughout the length and breadth of the troubled land'.³

The ruling chiefs constituted the most important category among the supporters of the British. As subordinate rulers, they were expected to support the paramount power in all crises. Nevertheless, it was necessary to secure their loyalty and support. The conduct of Maharaja Gulab Singh was not satisfactory in July 1857. 'One hundred and eighty-one mutineers had escaped into his territory, and he guaranteed their lives'. Many other acts of 'doubtful hue' were brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, including the plunder of some frontier villages in the district of Gujrat. However, it was deemed politic to wink at these things at the time. 'Foreseeing the value of assuring the loyalty of native chiefs by exhibiting the Maharaja Goolab Singh of Kashmir in active co-

1. Frederic Cooper, *Crisis in Punjab* (first published in 1858), Chandigarh: Sameer Parkashan, 1977, rpt., p. 131.

2. Ibid., p. 134.

3. Ibid., p. 131, 135.

operation and cordial alliance, Sir John Lawrence demanded a contingent; and the demand was acceded to, on faithful construction of the international engagements between feudatory chiefs and the paramount power'. Nearly all the contingents consisted of Dogras and Rajputs (contrary to the rumour that half of them were Purbias). The Chief Commissioner addressed them at Jalandhar and distributed robes of honour to the senior officers and largess to the men. This card was played to ensure their loyalty to the British. On the whole, however, Maharaja Gulab Singh remained rather aloof before he died in 1857, although the 'effectual aid' rendered by his nephew, Raja Jawahar Singh, son of Raja Dhian Singh, is acknowledged.⁴

The British assumed a calm posture for obviating the increasing alarm among the European residents, and also for deceiving the Sardars and chiefs about 'the magnitude of the crisis, and the extent of their own power'. Therefore, the offers of aid and service from them were declined initially. 'It was not politic to appear as if we threw ourselves upon the people'. Before long, admits Cooper, it became necessary to call upon the native princes to aid in the preservation of law and order, and their response was cordial. 'The efforts of their highnesses of Patiala, and Bikaner, and Kapurthallah, will ever stand forth in history as noble instances of Asiatic honour under circumstances of unparalleled temptation'. They were guided by common sense and pride: they were formally bound to support the East India Company (and an infringement of their obligation could invite harsh action if the British proved to be successful); if the Mughal emperor came back into power the chiefs were most likely to lose the degree of autonomy they were enjoying in the administration of their territories. Though all had their fancied or real grievances, they did not bring them up during the crisis to extract any promises.⁵

Cooper notes with satisfaction that the Maharaja of Patiala was ever ready to keep the main line of communication to Delhi open with the help of his contingents, as in the case of the signs of open mutiny on the part of two companies of the 5th Native Infantry posted at Thanesar. He also sheltered the European fugitives and gave princely hospitality to them. The attitude of the Maharaja of Patiala had a great 'moral influence'. Even earlier, some of the hill Ranas were in a state of uncertainty and apparently waited to see 'which side the Rajah of Patiala took'. When the Maharaja cast his lot with the British, the Ranas followed his example. Cooper has 'no doubt' that if Patiala had refused to comply 'all would have been lost' in the hill states.⁶

However, even the Patiala Chief expressed doubts in mid-July when he frankly asked G.C. Barnes, the Political Agent at Ambala, if in his own opinion the British Government would pull through the crisis. Barnes replied that all would be safe 'if the State could hold out until the 30th of August'. The Maharaja felt reassured and redoubled his efforts. The unhesitant loyalty of the Maharaja of

4. Ibid., pp. 70, 73, 101-2.

5. Ibid., pp. 13, 19.

6. Ibid., pp. 20, 61.

Patiala was important because of his large realm and the dangerous contiguity of his territories to the districts of Delhi. The Raja of Jind had no doubt or hesitation whatever. Voluntarily, he wrote a letter to the Chief Commissioner about the middle of July pledging himself to aid, and assuring him that 'he was in the cause heart and hand', and wanted his troops to join the assault on Delhi. The situation at this time was really gloomy for the British, admits Cooper.⁷

The former *jagirdars* of the Punjab were next in importance to the princes. In Lahore, Raja Dina Nath, who was 'a palpable thorn' for the British, had died but others were needed to be induced not to waver in their loyalty. The city of Lahore was important because of the presence of Muslims who were 'fully alive to the state of things'. 'Equally dangerous would have been any show of disaffection in the sister and neighbouring capital of Amritsar'. It was important because of its 'commercial interests'. 'Every class, creed, grade, and clime of Asia were represented. The trade operations were intimately mixed up with Delhi'. When the Grand Trunk Road became impassable and trade was temporarily suspended 'the discussion of politics became the order of the day'. Equally important was the fact that Amritsar had remnants of 'the Sikh national faith'. The 'temporary cohesion and unity of action' among Hindus and Muslims of the city could be reinforced by the Sikhs.

The steadiness of the atmosphere at Amritsar 'lent almost unhelped for weight to the public cause',⁸ encouraging 'the old rebels of the Sikh war, who were under a kind of official and social ban', to come forward with 'offers of service'. Their services were all the more useful for being the testimony of their faith in the stability of the British empire. Cooper notes with satisfaction that all those eminent individuals who had staunchly opposed the British in 1848-49 were eager to support them. The 'glorious old artillery men' of the Majha who had fought effectively against the British at Ferozeshahr and Mudki in 1845-46 came to the aid of the British now.⁹ They saw this as an opportunity for regaining their lost position in the army.

To Cooper's relief, 'the Sikhs generally were most eager to aid in the capture of Delhi'. They are said to believe in the prophecy that, in conjunction with 'topeewallahs' (the hat-wearing British), they would reconquer Delhi and 'place the head of the king's son on the very spot where the head of Guru Teg Bahadur had been exposed, one hundred and eighty years before, by order of Aurangzebe, the Great Mogul'. Cooper goes on to add that this prophecy appeared to have been fulfilled when Hodson captured the Mughal emperor and shot his two sons in the presence of a Sikh Risaldar of his troops. However, their bodies lay on the spot where English women and children had been massacred through their orders, and not where 'the head of Guru Teg Bahadur had been exposed'.¹⁰

7. Ibid., p. 101.

8. Ibid., pp. 11-12, 71.

9. Ibid., pp. 14-15, 71.

10. Ibid., p. 17.

In the tribal territories in the north-west, particularly around Jhelum, many sturdy village elders reportedly volunteered to pay revenues in advance. A posse of headmen actually formed a guard to escort money to the treasury at Rawalpindi. Cooper admits, however, that because of the involvement of the Mughal emperor as the central figure in the uprising, the Muslims were not trusted so much as the Sikhs. Nevertheless, new troops were raised with men from all the religious communities of the Punjab. In all, there were nearly 19,000 troops to watch an equal number of the Purbia soldiery in the Punjab. More than 13,000 among the Purbia soldiery had been disarmed and more than 5,500 of the 'reliable' troops were European. The remaining 13,320 of the 'reliable troops' were native. In addition, horse and foot levies were raised in almost all the districts of the province, and they amounted to 6,640 and 8,341 respectively. Called 'hillmen' in the table, they included Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus.¹¹

Understandably, Cooper dwells at some length on the disarming and even destruction of the native troops posted at 21 places in the province. Out of the disarmed troops, the Native Infantry at Peshawar rose in revolt and it was destroyed. The Light Infantry at Lahore also revolted and it was destroyed. The Light Cavalry at Ferozepur rose in revolt to be partly destroyed; a portion escaped to reach Delhi. At Jalandhar, two units of Native Infantry and one unit of Light Cavalry revolted and marched to Delhi. These were not the only native troops to rise in revolt. At six places the troops which revolted had not been disarmed: Naushehra, Jhelum, Sialkot, Phillaur, Ferozepur and Ambala. The units at three of these places were destroyed and one was disbanded; two succeeded in marching to Delhi. Cooper expresses his satisfaction that owing to the prompt and stern action of the British administrators of the Punjab, only a small part of the native troops in the province actually reached Delhi.¹²

Perhaps to highlight his own rather ruthless handling of the rebel sepoys, Cooper underlines that there were no 'half measures'. The principle strictly followed was that 'he who is not for us is against us'. There was no pause, either. From the first, the Judicial Commissioner Robert Montgomery had felt that timely severity was 'the greatest of humanity in the end; and that to prevent bloodshed, the sword must be wrested from the murderer's hands at all present sacrifice'. An Assistant Commissioner captured a party of mutineers who had fled from Jhelum and wrote to Montgomery, as to their disposal. Montgomery wrote on the reverse of the letter. 'I have ordered them all to be hanged'. This letter reached the Chief Commissioner, John Lawrence. Below the cryptic note of Montgomery, he simply wrote: 'All right'. No exception was to be made. At Sialkot, Montgomery used the same panacea for the Sikh Risaldar of a cavalry and the Sikh Subadar of a police battalion for not doing their duty. 'Had there been the faintest hesitation shown in bringing them to trial because they were Sikhs, or any tendency to relax

11. Ibid., pp. 70-71, iv-v, Appendices B, C, D and E.

12. Ibid., Table entitled, 'Disposition of Troops Subsequent to Outbreak'.

the construction of the law, the effect would have been most disastrous'. Montgomery knew this well. Without exception, officers were asked to preside over the trial of their own subordinates and sentence them to death.¹³

Building towards an account of his own conspicuous contribution, Cooper makes it very clear that 'a prompt and stern initiative' was the only way of striking terror into a semi-barbarous people. Therefore, the Punjab authorities adhered to this policy and brooked 'nothing short of absolute, active and positive loyalty'. The Government could not condescend 'to exist upon the moral sufferance of its subjects'. He was appreciative of the services and loyalty of the *tahsildars*, police officers and common *munshis* of all grades under his jurisdiction. When the Lahore rebels were captured in the district of Amritsar, they were marched for execution to a dry well near Ajnala ten by ten. When about 150 were executed, one of the executioners swooned and a little respite was allowed. The number reached 237 when the district officer was informed that the remaining 45 refused to come out. They were actually dead from fright, exhaustion, fatigue, heat and partial suffocation. Their bodies were dragged out and thrown into the pit where others were lying. A mound was raised over the spot, called the 'rebels grave' (*mufsid-gor*), inscribed by Cooper 'in tall capitals over the masonry in Persian, Gurmukhi and English'.¹⁴

Referring to the larger context of the preservation of the empire, Cooper says that 'the Governors of the Punjab', are of 'the true English stamp and mould, and knew that England expected every man to do his duty, and that duty done, thank them warmly for doing it. The crime was mutiny, and had there even been no murders to darken the memory of these men, the law was exact. The punishment was death'. Cooper thought that their extermination 'probably saved the lives of thousands'. The Chief Commissioner also hoped that this signal and summary punishment would deter all other corps from committing 'the atrocious and wanton murders which have disgraced the name of the Bengal sepoy'. The Chief Commissioner congratulated Cooper on his success, appreciated him and his police, and told him to make every effort 'to glean up all who are yet at large'. The Judicial Commissioner wrote to him that this would be a feather in his cap as long as he lived. All those who had helped in this action were to be suitably rewarded. The Raja of Kapurthala also congratulated Cooper for his success in dealing with the mutineers. It certainly made 'a very good impression on the minds of all disaffected troops in Punjab', Cooper notes with satisfaction.¹⁵

It was equally important to reward loyalty and service which was the other side of the same political coin. Apart from the officials on duty all individuals who helped in any way were rewarded in one way or another. Not considered reliable anymore, the Hindustani element in the executive and detective force was allowed to fall gradually into disuse. The cupidity of the villagers was excited by rich

13. Ibid., pp. 13, 19 n, 70, 80-81.

14. Ibid., pp. 82, 87-88.

15. Ibid., pp. 88-92.

rewards for the capture of mutinous sepoys dead or alive. The district police, on the first scent of treason, were egged on 'by the certainty of reward' to fasten on the track like sleugh-hounds and did not leave it until the astonished intriguer was grounded in his lair. The carrot of reward worked effectively for both the detectives and the spies. As Cooper puts it, 'No man's tongue was his own property'. There were spies in the market-places, at the festivals, in the places of worship, in the goals, in the hospitals, in the regimental bazaars, among casual gossipers on the bridges and bathers at the tanks, among the village circles round the wells under the big trees, among the pettifogging hangers on of the courts, among the stone-breakers of the highways, and among the dusty travellers at the *serais*. Cooper could not help adding that 'Asiatic chicane was paralysed before the newly aroused volition of the Anglo-Saxon'.¹⁶

In addition to the proverbial carrot and stick policy, the British relied on what is euphemistically called 'political management'. The elements of 'political capital' were separate interests, separate dialects, and often separate habits and customs of the people. These could be successfully moulded and wielded. In other words, differences on the basis of race and religion could be exploited. The 'hereditary and inextinguishable' aversion of the Sikhs to the Purbias could be used as 'the strongest and most malevolent weapon in the fight' to the great political advantage of the British. The Purbias, on the other hand, were told that they enjoyed far greater religious freedom under the British than what was allowed by the Sikh rulers. When the Chief Commissioner addressed the Hindustani soldiers of the Bengal Army on the first of June 1857, he reminded them that the British Government had never interfered with their religion. Only some time earlier, the Jamia Masjid of Lahore, 'which the Sikhs had converted into a magazine', was restored to the Muslims.¹⁷

The tactic of divide and rule was combined with utmost vigilance. Ferries were closely watched for the emissaries of insurrection. The native correspondence was more strictly scrutinized. The contents of one letter led to the execution of the addressee. Suspicious parties were arrested. Emissaries of every garb and hue had been dispatched by the 'machinators' to undermine the Sikhs and to upset the tottering loyalty of the Native Infantry. A vast number of *bairagi faqirs* had cropped up. Political arrests became rapid. 'The haunts of old Sikh fanatics were looked up, and their inmates cared for'. Strangely dressed men were seen in Sadar stations 'with an unusual partiality for swords and matchlocks'. They were all arrested, their arms seized, and securities taken from them if their answers were satisfactory; otherwise, they were imprisoned indefinitely, pending the upshot of events.¹⁸

That the people had not been cowed down entirely is evident from the correspondence intercepted or even orchestrated by the British. To undermine the Sikh loyalty, a Bania wrote from Jagadhari that the price of wheat was

16. Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

17. Ibid., pp. 25, 30, 131.

18. Ibid., pp. 12-14, 27.

unprecedentedly low, and all were in excellent spirits until it was found that the Government had mixed pulverized bones with the flour. A Sikh sepoy confided to a friend that there was a great uproar and the *firangis* could not last long; they were being beaten again and again before Delhi. But he did not know who would supplant the British. Another letter contained a plot for massacring a whole British family in Jalandhar. A *naik* in Peshawar was hanged for receiving a letter in response to his query about the disposal of Europeans: 'They were to be all massacred, without respect to age, sex or person'. While one such letter exhorted loyalty to the salt and asserted that the British would be supreme after three months, another forecast the fall of the white people and the rise of Hindustanis. Yet another letter referred to the pending invasion of Hindustan by Russia with a vast army. One letter expected a new Raj. It is interesting to note that the protégés of the British also wrote letters to influence people in their favour. Rajab Ali Khan, for example, wrote to Hakim Ahsanullah Khan in a manner that if the letter reached him he could come to the British side and if it was intercepted the Hakim himself could be punished for intrigue. The fact that this letter is reproduced by Cooper leaves no doubt that it was orchestrated.¹⁹

Cooper admits to the gravity of the situation heightened by the long siege of Delhi, which was at the same time a siege of the Ridge occupied by the British. The delay obviously was not conducive to sustain loyalty for them as their prestige was waning. The Sikhs who returned to the Punjab declared that they were fighting battles of the British. One old Sikh said that they were likely to fight against the British in a year. There were other people who sympathized with the Mughal emperor. A Hindustani mentioned casually in Amritsar that the King of Delhi appreciated the services of Montgomery but had told him now to leave via Bombay. Native Christians were threatened in the streets of Amritsar.²⁰

There was excitement in the air, speculation was rife, and rumours or news of all sorts were reported. The shops of Ilahi and Nabi Bakhsh in Amritsar catered to the needs of the Europeans, supplying beer, brandy, pickles, hams, wines, cigars, etc. These shops became arenas of political discussion. It transpired that the admixture of cows-bones was accepted as a fact, and the Sikhs were instigated to make it a *causus belli*. A man named Nur Muhammad Khan came from Delhi with suits of *faqirs*' clothes as disguises for future emergencies. He was arrested. 'Had all the suspected been pursued, the number of Mussulmans involved would have become embarrassing to Government', admitted Cooper. This new danger had to be avoided. A sepoy tore down a British proclamation in Ropar and exhorted the Hindu residents to interdict the slaughter of cows. A civilian lent his support to this view. He was hanged at once. The disreputable inhabitants of the ill-famed and troublesome city of Ludhiana experienced the iron rod of G. Ricketts who quelled all disturbances in the district. In Sialkot, all the neighbouring villages were roused by the tales of the restoration of the Mughal dynasty and the extinction of

19. Ibid., pp. 11-12, 16-17, 138-40.

20. Ibid., pp. 17-18, 103.

British power; they emptied their hordes upon the station and left it a complete wreck. 'This once splendid cantonment, with its enormous public and private property, first became a scene of deliberate waylaying and cold-blooded murder, and then the theatre of havoc and ruin', observes Cooper regretfully.²¹

Apparently, all was not well with the people of the region. Much though he underplayed what had happened in Sirsa, Hansi and Hissar, Cooper could not ignore that the English had been decimated in the south-eastern tracts. An instantaneous occupation of these territories in close proximity to Delhi was important to the British. General Van Cortlandt gained a decisive victory over the rebel Bhattis on 19 June 1857 and routed them from a strong position. Two hundred out of two thousand Bhattis were killed in the battle. Sirsa had become depopulated, half sacked and half burnt. The tombs of the Christians in the small cemetery were half despoiled. But Oliver had not left his post and established British power on a firmer footing. A pensioned Subadar, Gurbakhsh, was one of the chief instigators of the mutiny. He had taken refuge in a rebel Ranghar village called Bitoul. It was battered down and sacked. Gurbakhsh was killed. Cooper feels gratified that no woman was allowed to be touched. Another rebel village, Mungli, was attacked and destroyed by Cortlandt on 11 September. A few more villages were condignly punished.²² Involvement of the civilian population in the uprising was obvious enough.

What happened in the wild district of Gugaira in the south-west after the fall of Delhi was even more difficult to understand and explain. Major Hamilton appeared to have established his influence over the warlike clans and tribes of Multan. His administration appeared to have inspired a general respect for the British power. In July, a daring attempt was made at outbreak in the Gugaira goal. It was sternly suppressed by Lieutenant Elphinstone. A fierce insurrection broke out in the district in the hour of victory and success. It taxed the mental and physical resources of the Chief Commissioner to the utmost. It required hard work to quell and crush the insurrection. Cooper does not give any detail. It is obvious, however, that he understood the gravity of the civil insurrection in the district of Gugaira.²³

Cooper generally wrote like a racist, taking for granted the superiority of Europeans in general, and of the Anglo-Saxons in particular. The term 'Asiatic' often used by him was meant to characterize the ignoble traits of the people of the Punjab, nay India as opposed to the merits and virtues of the Anglo-Saxons who characterized the best in the Western civilization. This mentality could not be a result merely of the uprising. It could in fact be a factor in the situation which led to the uprising. Another important element in Cooper's mentality was superiority of the Christian faith. Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence to whom he dedicated his book was a patriot, a soldier, a statesman and also a 'Christian'. At several places

21. Ibid., pp. 18, 21-22, 75-76.

22. Ibid., pp. 7-10.

23. Ibid., p. 29.

in his work Cooper refers to providence. When all was said and done, 'God Almighty with his own right hand and stretched out arm has gotten himself the victory'. To those who were fond of reading signs, Cooper pointed to 'the solitary golden cross still gleaming aloft on the summit of the Christian church in Delhi, whole and untouched; though the ball on which it rests is riddled with shots deliberately fired by the infidel populace. The cross symbolically triumphant over a shattered globe!'²⁴ This closing sentence of the book as well as the general slant of Cooper's account reveals much about himself and his ilk. Unconsciously, he reveals much also about the attitudes of the people towards the decade old colonial rule.

II

Rev. J. Cave-Browne shared several of Cooper's assumptions. He was familiar with all the stations from Delhi to Peshawar and knew many of the men who had taken a leading part in the events of May-September 1857. He began by keeping a journal for the private information of his family. In view of the general interest in the events he serialized his information in the *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1858 under the title of 'Poorbeah Mutiny'. His articles were well received and he thought of writing 'a continuous narrative'. He received plenty of information from all quarters and in all shapes, and he collected the published materials on the subject to bring out *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857* in 1861 as a narrative of the measures by which the Punjab was saved and Delhi was recovered. Cave-Browne had great admiration for the Punjab administrators: Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner, 'the worthy brother of the martyr of Lucknow' (Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence), Robert Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner, Donald McLeod, Herbert Edwardes, Sydney Cotton, Stuart Corbett, George C. Barnes, Neville Chamberlain, Crawford Chamberlain, George Ricketts, Frederic Cooper and, above all, John Nicholson. Cave-Browne identified himself with the Punjab administration so completely that he does not hesitate 'to admit that he felt as a *Punjabee*'.²⁵

Cave-Browne was prompted to write his book by 'feelings of humble gratitude to Heaven'. To escape alive in the crisis of May to September 1857 was a 'signal mercy'. 'If the Lord himself had not been on our side when men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick'. He admired the wisdom, the devotion and the heroism of those who were human agents of this preservation. They could 'read hopefully the many signs of God's providence around'.²⁶

Interestingly, while expressing his appreciation of Cooper's handling of the city of Amritsar and its environs, Cave-Browne affords glimpses into the ground situation as seen by the British administrators. Amritsar was important because of its '*national religious character*'. The Khalsa could make a common cause with

24. Ibid., pp. 135, 137.

25. Rev. J. Cave-Browne, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857* [first published in 1861], Patiala: Punjab Languages Department, 1989, rpt., pp. viii-xiii.

26. Ibid., pp. vii, 165.

the Purbias, whether Muslim or Hindu, in expelling a common enemy who had humbled them all. The safety of the Gobindgarh fort was, therefore, of crucial importance. The city of Amritsar had both Sikh and Muslim population. In Cave-Browne's view:

In such a population the embers of religious animosity were continually smouldering; and the true policy at such a crisis was to prevent their being entirely extinguished, and at the same time to guard against their bursting out into open flame. In their jealous rivalry lay our security. To keep the two classes thus in mutual check to counter balance – race by race, and creed by creed – was the great aim of the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. F. Cooper, on whom the duty devolved. His tact and energy commanded the success they deserved. His great personal influence and unremitting exertions secured the co-operation of the leaders of both classes without shaking the confidence of either; and thus the peace of the city of Umritsar was undisturbed.²⁷

The policy of 'divide and rule' to deal with a crisis situation was very much in place in the Punjab.

Cave-Browne supplements Cooper's information on the attitude of the Sikh princes and nobility. While dwelling on the role of the chiefs of Patiala, Jind and Kapurthala, he does not ignore Nabha. He gives English version of a *farman* addressed by the Mughal emperor to the Maharaja of Patiala as his vassal. This communication was promptly sent by the Maharaja to the Political Agent who forwarded it to the Chief Commissioner. From amongst the erstwhile 'Sikh' nobility are mentioned the old Sikh commander-in-chief Raja Tej Singh who raised a *risala* of cavalry; Sardar Shamsher Singh Sandhanwalia added another; and so did a natural son of General Ventura. The son of Raja Dhian Singh, named Jawahar Singh, was too poor to raise any force but he rallied round him 700 old retainers of his father. 'It was clear that what remained of the old Sikh nobility, though crippled in resources and lowered in position, were yet ready to throw the weight of their influence into the scale of order. All this looked well. The Sikhs were clearly with us, from policy, if from no better motive'.²⁸

The Sikhs in general were seen as a source of strength. In their peaceful indifference or antipathy to the Purbias, the Jat agricultural population of the Punjab was regarded as 'our chief guarantee for the peace of the country'. In fact, Cave-Browne takes notice of all categories of Sikhs in his narrative. The man who revealed the secret of fires at Ambala in 1857 was a Sikh sepoy named Sham Singh. He told the Deputy Commissioner that the great body of sepoys were in a highly indignant and excited state, under the apprehension that they were all to be compelled to use the offensive cartridge; when such an order came, 'every bungalow in the station should be in flames'. This was brought to the notice of Sir John Lawrence. He attached much value to this information and 'promised that the faithful Sikh should be cared for'. The man who discovered a deep laid

27. Ibid., pp. 95-97.

28. Ibid., pp. 108, 163-64, 170, 174-75, 189, 202-5, 214, 227, 234, 237 n, 293, 340-47.

conspiracy that had been formed at the Mian Mir cantonment by the native troops, which involved the safety of the Lahore fort and the lives of all the European residents of the city, was a non-commissioned Sikh officer.²⁹

The British relied increasingly on the Sikh sepoys and respected their feelings and sentiments. When the Sikh sepoys of the Native Infantry corps, which were disarmed at Lahore, remonstrated that they were hurt at being involved in the common disgrace with their Purbia comrades, Brigadier Corbett drafted them out of their different regiments and formed them into a separate body, with the arms restored to them. To show the fullest confidence in this class, an order was issued that all Sikhs belonging to the regiments quartered south of Ambala, who were on leave north of the Sutlej, should present themselves at Lahore. They soon arrived there and became the nuclei of new regiments. In Jalandhar, nearly 140 men of all ranks did not join the mutineers. A considerable number of them were Sikhs. Several other Sikh recruits had been compelled to join their comrades. Taking advantage of a dust-storm they slipped away and made for their homes in the Majha. They were discovered and brought before the civil authorities in Amritsar. After hearing their explanation, they were liberated. In Peshawar, the plan adopted by Brigadier Corbett at Lahore was carried out on a larger scale: all Sikhs and Punjabis were separated from the Purbias. 'To single these men out, to show full trust in them by restoring their arms, and forming them into a separate corps, was to set the seal on their loyalty'. This corps was subsequently enrolled in the Punjab Irregular Force which later became the 16th Punjab Infantry.³⁰

In continuation of this general policy, a new class of Sikhs was inducted for service in the army: the Mazhabi Sikhs. They were little known and generally despised, but their physical power and spirit of endurance made them valuable in the crisis. They had been thrown out of work. They eagerly responded to the call given by Colonel Edwards to be drafted to Delhi. 'They dug trenches, raised batteries, and even sometimes worked the guns, and throughout did good and faithful service'. A large number of them were then formed into 'Pioneer Corps', later called the 24th Punjabis.³¹

However, all had not been well for the British. While referring to the emissaries of insurrection, Cave-Browne explains that in many an English soldier, the ruling passion of 'revenge' was at least partly the result of the atrocities perpetrated by the Purbias and the Gujars. 'In villages along with roadside were found trophies of robbery and murder: English ornaments and dresses. Villagers even at the foot of the gallows, exultingly told of women defamed and murdered and children butchered'. That was why a Purbia regiment in the force was neither welcome nor safe.³²

Significantly, the spirit of insurrection was not confined to the Purbias.

29. Ibid., pp. 47-48, 87, 278.

30. Ibid., pp. 208, 226, 250-51 & n.

31. Ibid., pp. 271-72 & n.

32. Ibid., pp. 119-20, 141, 142-44, 203, 232, 237-40.

Major Hamilton had to summon into Multan the chief men of the most influential clans and detain them as hostages for the good conduct of their clans. In Ferozepur, the sepoys were instigated for action by the local *maulvis* and Banias. When some of the disarmed native troops marched towards Delhi, all of them were not seized in the Patiala territory partly because of the 'sympathy of native officials'. They reached Delhi to be re-equipped with arms. Cave-Browne describes at some length how a conspiracy was formed in the Punjab hills with its centre in Kullu. The seditious correspondence intercepted by Major Hay showed that 'it had drawn within its influence several of the neighbouring chiefs, and the whole district was in danger'. The pretender Partap Singh and his accomplice Bir Singh were hanged. 'All their property confiscated, their houses left in ruins as monuments of the fruitlessness of rebellion, and warnings of the rebels' end'.³³

III

It is possible to see in retrospect, that both Cave-Browne and Cooper had a common purpose: to commend the British administrators of the Punjab involved in handling the crisis situation in 1857. In their sagacity, vigilance, promptness and sternness they were seen verily as the instruments of God. The two accounts shared the assumption of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxons as a race and of Christianity as a faith. Both the writers hated the Purbias and appreciated the Sikhs. Cave-Browne and Cooper also seem to agree about the strategies to be used for dealing with different segments among the natives, which essentially amounted to the policies of carrot and stick and divide and rule, or of psychologically playing one group against the other.

The two writers are keen to give the impression that the Punjabis in general and the Sikhs in particular supported the British. However, as evident from their own accounts, there were individuals and groups in the rural and urban areas in different parts of the region, in the hills as well as the plains, who sympathized with the rebels, and even actively worked against the British wherever possible. They came from amongst the ruling princes, their officials, religious leaders, traders, tribal and village communities and the peasants. There were Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims among them.³⁴

Notwithstanding these palpable expressions of discontent against the British in 1857, it must be conceded that the situation in the Punjab where the British were trying to pacify its population was substantially different from that in several other territories in North India. While Awadh, Rohilkhand, Bundelkhand and Delhi emerged as the focal points of the uprising, its echoes went beyond northern and central India to several other parts of the subcontinent, down to Kerala. As a result of prolonged direct and indirect domination of the British, discontent against

33. Ibid., pp. 100, 103, 118, 279-82.

34. For some additional information about the people's response in the Punjab region in 1857, see *Rethinking 1857 and the Punjab*, ed. Navtej Singh, Patiala: Punjabi University, 2008 (especially, the contributions by Shamsul Islam, Bir Good Gill, Amrit Varsha Gandhi and K.C. Yadav [the last translated into Punjabi]).

their political and economic policies, and particularly against their handling of the Bengal Army predominantly composed of the Purbias, had been mounting, and there had been mutinies and local uprisings for half a century or more. Coming in the wake of Dalhousie's imperialist rigour, 1857 presented a historical conjuncture for the discontented people from different regions and social backgrounds when the grievances of the ruling and landed classes as well as the soldiery, peasantry and the artisans seemed to coalesce against the rule of the East India Company. In the Punjab region, its south-eastern parts which came under British control in 1803, also had a taste of their exploitative policies and measures and of the cumulative discontent erupting in a civil rebellion in 1857 that virtually ousted the British from the Haryana area.³⁵ A somewhat comparable situation was witnessed in Ludhiana, which had been under British control for nearly half a century by then, and where the anger and hatred of the local people against all symbols of British authority reportedly reached a feverish pitch in 1857.³⁶

By contrast, the 'Punjab proper' across the Sutlej had experienced colonial rule only for eight years. It was as late as the 1840s when Ranjit Singh's kingdom first came into direct conflict with the British who were initially regarded as a threat to its independence, and subsequently as the usurpers of its sovereignty. In the Anglo-Sikh wars, to borrow the Punjabi poet Shah Muhammad's expression, the Hindus (including Sikhs) and Muslims who had been 'living peacefully together' were forced to fight 'a third community', that is the British. In short, if 1857 represents a political, military and economic conjuncture for those regions which had been under the Company's rule for half a century or more, a comparable response from the Punjab can perhaps be looked for half a century later, around 1907, when cutting across religious affiliations, rural and urban classes had risen against the British in different parts of the province. The agitators included the peasants and workers, trading communities and professional people, students and even soldiers.³⁷ At any rate, the historical experience of the Punjab region suggests that for India in 1857 it may not be meaningful to think in terms of a single linear narrative of resistance against colonial domination.

35. See K.C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1977, pp. 19-36, 129-36.

36. Bir Good Gill, '1857: The Punjab Situation', in *Rethinking 1857 and the Punjab*, pp. 81-82.

37. J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, 'Background of Resistance to British Domination', in *The Ghadar Movement: Background, Ideology, Action and Legacy*, pp. 88-109.

ANOTHER GHADR

*Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich**

'Bugle Of War', in the form of 'Ailan-e-Jang' is sounded, — of revolt against slavery by thousands of Indians, mostly Sikhs settled in Canada-U.S.A. in the early years of the twentieth century. They had been girding up their loins for years and formed 'Ghadr Party' in March 1913, with the avowed object to stir up a *Ghadr* in India, like the 1857 at one at the most opportune moment.

Lo! That moment had come as England had declared War against Germany on 4-8-1914: Now the British masters can be cornered.

In the issue of *Ghadr*, the weekly journal of the party, dated 4-8-1914, War is declared vide *Ailan-e-Jung* published therein. Thousands respond to the call to sail to India instantly to wage a war of DO AND DIE ! The dollar wealth which had in fact initially allured them, earned by their hard labour had lost its charm in the flush of love for the Motherland. 'This "Declaration of War" was not the handiwork of a "paper tiger". This comes out straight from none else than the Tribunal — the Court with extra-ordinary powers which tried Ghadrites in "Lahore Conspiracy Cases" in 1915-16. It found that the movement had "developed into a FORMIDABLE organization to cause mutiny resulting in the resolve to go to India when war broke out.'¹

From Frustration To Ailan-e-jang

The Indian settlers in American continent had to face troubles, travails besides humiliation during their stay abroad: Their predicament is best conveyed in two lines of Punjabi in free verse echoed by all of them:

*"Des Pain Dhakke, Bahar Mile Dhoi Naa
Sada Pardesian Da Des Koi Naa"*
(Humiliated back home, no solace abroad,
For us aliens no refuge around).

This desperate moaning and self-pity literally through a metamorphosis, is transformed into a clarion call for 'War':

*"Challo challiye desh nun yudh karan,
Eho bachan te farman ho gae"*
(Let us go to our country to fight,
This is our ultimate compact and command).

Two documents, independent in origin dated 1910 vocalise the line of thinking

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1. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Harinder Singh, *Ghadr Movement Original Documents*, Vol. I, Lahore Conspiracy Cases I and II, Unistar Publishers, Chandigarh, 2008, p. 124.

which was emerging around that time. Although the Indian settlers in American continent had problems galore right since they set their feet there with the dawn of the century but their woes were becoming more and more acute and besides more acutely felt now. Perhaps the virtual ban on new entrants into Canada including the families of old settlers imposed in 1908 may have triggered suchlike expressions, foreboding of the impending developments.

Writings like these two were to herald the era of propagation of revolutionary national resurgence which was later institutionalised in weekly publication like *Ghadr* and revolutionary poetical series — *Ghadr-Di-Gunj* after the formal launching of Ghadr Party in 1913.

Suchlike writings had a dual function i.e. an expression of sentiments while at the same time stimulating complementary responses like a chain reaction.

A Flash back

Stirrings in England: 1907

Indeed it was a peculiar twist of circumstances that nurtured the tradition of celebrating 10th May 1857 by Indians in England as the red letter day which heralded challenges to the very existence of British rule in India.

The precise unfolding of this trend of glorifying past heroes of freedom struggle had then been dwelt upon by Bhagat Singh.

This trend of glorifying heroes of past struggles against the British rule germinated and caught on initially in England, then in Canada, America and even beyond, though not on the Indian soil as yet.

Narrates Bhagat Singh, "In 1907, The English thought of celebrating their history of 1857 by way of Golden Jubilee. To refresh the events of 1857, the leading English papers brought out special issues containing articles of eminent Englishmen. Plays were staged, lectures delivered wherein the *Ghadr*ites were painted in the darkest possible colours. So much so, that whatever was suggested to their minds whims and fantasies, was ventilated.

"Stung by the abuses showered upon (the leaders of 1857) Mr. Savarkar undertook to organise functions in honour of the Indian heroes like Nana Sahib, Maharani Jhansi, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh and Maulvi Ahmed Sahib to present an authentic picture. It was indeed a daring venture, which was then started at no place other than the English capital London. Since an average Englishman considered these Indian leaders as scoundrels, no Indian leader of consequence dared to join these occasions. But the youth were all for Savarkar. A special function was organised in India House (run by Savarkar) in their memory. Fasts were observed, and pledges taken that for one full week none of the luxuries shall be indulged in. Leaflets entitled "O! Martyrs" were distributed in India and England. Indian students, studying in Oxford, Cambridge and Inns, Court sported beautiful badges on their chests, "*In Honour of Martyrs of 1857*". Many scenes of tension were witnessed both in bazaars and universities and colleges in the wake of the above events. Many (Indian) students lost their scholarships, while many others

gave them up on their own. Quite a few were called back to India by the parents. Political scenario in England became radicalised. Consequently, the Indian government felt perturbed and disturbed.

"The news of all these developments somehow reached far and wide. Wherever (outside India) the said events became known, 10th May was celebrated with gusto. The people felt enraged that the English stigmatized our national heroes. They started observing 10th of May each year partly in protest against their leaders' dark portrayal by the ruling class, and partly to commemorate their heroic exploits."

Bhagat Singh concluded the article by reminding his countrymen of their obligation to the motherland for whose liberation hundreds and thousands of Indians laid down their lives; to search their hearts, to introspect in order to realise their responsibility as true sons of India.

As highlighted in the above cited article, it was precisely the attempt of the rulers to glorify their success in suppressing the 1857 uprising while tarnishing the names of the Indian leaders that provoked people like Savarkar to do the opposite at the said juncture of 1907 i.e. fifty years after the event. The inevitable followed. The articulate opinion on the issue became polarized into PRO-1857 and ANTI-1857 segments. The extent and magnitude of this polarization shall be fully borne out by the contents of *Indian Sociologist* edited by the eminent Indian revolutionary Sh. Shyamaji Krishan Verma from Paris. One issue (July 1909) had been relied upon by the prosecution in the trial of Dhingra to establish that his act of killing an Englishman was not a freak event but the inevitable result of a particular outlook disseminated among others by publications like *Indian Sociologist*.²

B. Rules and regulations of Hindustani Association of Vancouver (Canada)

(Issued under the signatures of Sunder Singh, the Secretary on 23-10-1910).

(The nomenclature Hindustani Association, and the frame-work delineated in this document emerged as the prototype of "Ghadr Party" which indeed was formalized as "Hindi Association of Pacific Coast in March 1913 at Portland, U.S.A.")

Some excerpts from this historic documents are reproduced from the original, which sounded an alarm at the highest echelons of the British Empire, i.e., India Office at London.

NAME

This association shall be called Hindustani Association.

OBJECT

To establish Liberty, Equality and Fraternity of the Hindustani nation in

2. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Kuldip Puri, *Tryst with Martyrdom — Trial of Madan Lal Dhingra*, Unistar Publications, Chandigarh, 2013, pp. 25-27.

their relations with the rest of the nations of the world.

MEMBERS

Every Hindustani by his birth-right is eligible to become a member of this Association, and on the following conditions:

- (1) That he must sign an application that he will carry out the objects of the Association to the last of his ability.
- (2) That he will eliminate prejudice of caste, color and creed for himself.

MANAGING COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

Managing Committee will be chosen by a ballot or vote in general meeting. The Committee will then choose other officers.

MEETINGS

Ordinary meetings will be held every week to discuss and promote objects of the association.

Significant to note that under the innocent looking name of Hindustani Association — (later Hindi Association) a revolutionary outfit was in the offing.

Then the membership criteria and the obligations symbolised a truly national identity transcending the limits of caste, creed and color.

Finally the organization was truly democratic wherein all the powers and authority flowed from bottom upwards.³

THE CHURNING SCENARIO

Both U.S.A. and Canada encompass a huge mass of land a lot of which, particularly in case of the latter is uninhabitable. Of the rest there are industrial centres scattered throughout in the lengths and breadths of the two countries. As for the industry, the Indian emigrants being predominantly villagers, semi-literate with a large sprinkling of ex-servicemen who did have some exposure to unfamiliar places and countries were naturally not much attracted to.

Their natural instinct was to go to places, which first of all were climate friendly: As a matter of fact almost all of them voyaged via East Asia, prodding through the Pacific and landing on the Western Coast of the American continent.

Initially almost all of them ventured into the province of British Columbia in Canada because of the Empire link since it too was a Dominion of the Empire. But after 1908 or so, the trend changed in favour of America both for the aforementioned restrictions as well as for the relatively higher wages down south. Again the favoured region in U.S.A. also was the West Coast, or the Pacific Coast for the familiar climate. Thus in the State of California area around San Francisco, and in the adjoining States of Oregon and Washington the city centres of Saint John, Portland, Seattle, Astoria were among the prominent cluster concentrations favoured by Indians.

Background wise 80% of them were Punjabi Sikhs from districts of Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur and Ferozepur, which till 1947 was considered Central Punjab. They were employed as agricultural labourers, in laying

3. *Ghadr Documents*, Vol. I, p. 500.

across of new railway lines, in Saw—mills, and in reclaiming forest lands. Meanwhile, some Indian students who could not afford the exorbitant expenses of education in England were attracted to U.S.A. which afforded *inter alia* the scope of part-time or seasonal employment to meet their expenses therefrom. Of these two in particular, viz., Kartar Singh from village Sarabha in Ludhiana, and Vishnu Ganesh Pingale from Poona both played a stellar role in the saga of freedom struggle ultimately offering themselves at the altar of liberation in Central Jail Lahore on 16th November 1915.

According to Prof. Jagjit Singh, the author of a pioneer publication on the movement, "Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society was established with the initiative of (Sant) Baba Wasakha Singh (of Dadehar—Amritsar) and Baba Jawala Singh (of Thathian, Amritsar) in their vast potato farm at Stockton; they were known as "potato kings". Among the socio-cultural service rendered to the Indian community through the famous Gurdwara, which was destined to become a birthplace of the impending revolt, they ran a sort of work centre for the students therearound.³ This social proximity between the students and the lay Indian emigrant emerged as the integrating factor in the movement.⁴

Quite an important part in this movement was played by the rebel intellects in exile, prominent among them being Lala Hardial, who became the founder Secretary of the Party, Prof Teja Singh (later Sant Teja Singh of Mastuana), Bhai Parmanand (Lahore), Sh Tarak Nath Das from Bengal and Shyamji Krishan Verma. It was then a veritable confluence of brain, brawn and youth with age, a unique synthesis of disparate social segments which seldom really blend in the same spectrum.

AN OVERVIEW OF GHADR PARTY

Here is the saga of these brave men, the trail blazers of freedom struggle of India.

The founder President of the Ghadr Party, Sohan Singh Bhakna, revered as "BABA" Sohan Singh Bhakna (accused No. 74 in Lahore Conspiracy Case) installed a plaque in memory of the Ghadr Party at his native village Bhakna, District Amritsar in May 1966, before his demise in December 1968 at the age of 99. The inscription is worded in Punjabi (Gurmukhi Script), and its English translation, reads as under:

Which party of our country blazed the trail of
FREEDOM and EQUALITY?

THE GHADR PARTY

Which came into existence in America

In

March 1913

With the COMBINED efforts of

4. Jagjit Singh, *Ghadr Party Lehar* (Punjabi), Navyug Publishers, Chandni Chowk, Delhi 1956.

Indian Workers,
 Indian Patriots in Exile
 And
 Indian Students in America
 WHICH RAISED THE FLAG OF FREEDOM.
 Whereupon
 Numerous martyrs laid down their lives,
 And
 Hundreds of revolutionaries were condemned for life to the veritable hell of
 Cellular Jail in Andamans.
 THOUGH
 The Ghadr Party could not achieve its goal
 YET
 The efforts of the party infused verve and vitality into the
 despondent psyche of the Indian people;
 the result thereof is before us all.
 Thereby

ONE MORE CHAPTER OF VALOUR HAS BEEN ADDED IN
 THE SAGA OF OUR FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
 GUIDELINES of the Party:
 UNITY - leads to vitality and freedom.
 DISUNITY - results in weakness and subjugation.
 INTEGRATION - leads to an equitable order.
 However
 INTERNAL STRIFE - is the path to national ruin.
 Hence
 ARISE YOUNG MEN!
 BE IN TUNE WITH THE CHANGING TIMES! FULFIL YOUR DESTINED
 DUTY!
 Eradicate all kinds of bondages
 Be it Economic, Political or Social.
 True religion
 Is
 Humanity.
 Long live the people!
 Sohan Singh Bhakna (Baba)
 1 May 1966.⁵

Publications: The "Ghadr", "Ghadr Gunjan"

The legendary Baba's, as the Ghadrtes came to be venerated, improvised

5. Autobiography of Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich (ed.), *Jeewan Sangram* (Punjabi), Tarak Bharti Prakashan, Barnala, 2003, p. 79.

most apt media of propagating and inculcating the revolutionary ethos among the vast mass of Indians both back home as well as among those living abroad.

The *Ghadr* was launched on 1st November 1913 from party head-quarters — 'The Yugantar Ashram', adopted from the name of party office of *Yugantar* (the new era) a revolutionary outfit bearing that name, which was located at Calcutta.

The earlier issues of the paper were brought out in a hand machine operated by Kartar Singh Sarabha and one Raghbir Dyal from UP. Chief Editor Lala Hardial used to write in Urdu which was then translated into Gurmukhi (Punjabi) by Kartar Singh. The very title of the paper — *GHADR* symbolized that 1857 Ghadr was the model. It aimed at combining a mass upsurge with a military revolt. It was based on the presumption that unless military joins the uprising it cannot succeed. (Hail the foresight of those who proved right since the British quit India in 1946-47 only when Navy revolted in the wake of I.N.A. trials in the Red Fort, and people of Bombay came out in thousands in their support facing bullets coupled with the reports of this revolt spreading to Army and Air Force). The bold "Ghadr" headline carried with it a white inscription "*Angrezi raj da dushman*, Urdu, Gurmukhi *Akhbar*." (Enemy of British rule, Urdu, Gurmukhi paper).

On top of "Ghadr" a citation from *Guru Granth Sahib* was reproduced:

"*Jau Tau Prem Khelan Ka Chao*

Sir Dhar Tali Gali Mori Aao."

[If ye desireth playing game of love,

enter herein sporting head on your palm].

On both top corners — *VANDE* (on left) and *MARTAM* (on right) were highlighted.

Vande Matram (Mother! I bow to thee) was the title of a song in a Bengali Novel "*Anand Math*" by Bankim Chander Chatterjee portraying a Sanyasi revolt against *Malechh* rule.

This novel was a scripture for the later revolutionaries like legendary Sardar Bhagat Singh too. "*VANDE MATRAM*" continued to be the war cry of the freedom struggle till it was substituted by *INQLAB—ZINDABAD* after April 1929, i.e., the throwing of a bomb in Central Assembly by Sardar Bhagat Singh and Sh B.K. Dutt while chanting the latter slogan.

The contents of the paper "*Ghadr*" covered a wide spectrum like:—

- a) Ways of economic exploitation by British rulers in India.
- b) Exposure of "true character" of political moves of British government in India.
- c) Reproductions from Vir Savarkar treatise on 1857 Ghadr.
- d) Guidelines for Indians living in America.
- e) Exposure of British intervention in International affairs.
- f) A few revolutionary poems — later published in separate volume serialized as "*Ghadr-di-Gunj*".

Language employed here was of down to earth hue, colloquial. The poems written by warriors for warriors presumably lacked the literary finesse but had an

electrifying effect [This writer once met a contemporary of Baba (Shahid) Bhan Singh (of village Sunet) in 1968. He, in a nostalgic mood started reciting those lines, with a zeal and passion “beyond description, with his face burning like red hot coals.”]

Based on writer's interviews with the surviving Ghadri Babas during 1960's, 70's and 80's, it came out that every Ghadrite martyr spent his “last night” chanting these poems. Legendary — Kartar Singh a young man yet under twenty after the fizzling out of projected rising on 19.2.1915 had left India for Kabul along with (Shahid) Jagat Singh (Sursingh, Amritsar) and (Baba) Harnam Singh Tundilat (Kotla Naudh Singh, Hoshiarpur). Somewhere near the border, they had all gone to sleep. Around mid-night Kartar Singh all of a sudden got up and exhorted his comrades to return instantly to galvanise the remnant resources. It was learnt that the impetus for this ‘u-turn’ was the recollection of one of his favourite lines from “*Ghadri di Gunj*”:-

“*Banee Sir Sheran*

Kee Janaa Bhajj Ke.”

(Lions confronted, Flee not).

The spread of “Ghadri” spirit even among the most convetted fortress of the Empire viz: the army and geographically transcending even continental barriers was mostly due to the electrifying impact of these “echoes of mutiny.”

In Ludhiana, the students in the boarding houses, age-mates of Kartar Singh replicate Ghadrite literature with a cyclostyling machine to fill up the void created by import constraints.

CASCADE OF PUBLIC GATHERINGS

The flames of sedition began to percolate slowly over California and Oregon in which States there were a big number of Indian emigrants.

The first fruits were the establishment in Astoria (Oregon) of a Hindustani Association towards the end of 1912 or in the beginning of 1913: At a meeting which was addressed by Munshi Ram, Karim Baksh, Nawab Khan, Kesar Singh Thathgarh, Banta Singh Sangowal and Kartar Singh Sarabha—Kesar Singh was elected President and Balwant Singh Secretary.⁶

The avowed objects of the Association were:

- a. Receipt of vernacular papers from India.
- b. Importation of youth from India to America for education with a view to prepare them for ‘national’ work in India.
- c. Weekly meetings to discuss politics — the result of which in the words of Nawab Khan (approver), was that the ‘members began to feel for their country’.

Nawab Khan also stated that the ‘Hindustani Association’ had much the same ideas as the subsequent Hindi Association..... “That it aimed at the unity of India

6. *Ghadri Documents*, Vol. I, p. 112.

of all creeds, education and opposition to the British Government." [Judgement of Lahore Conspiracy Case]⁷.

In this series, scores of meetings continued to be held at important centres where Indians had a sizeable presence on the West Pacific Coast. A blow by blow account of such meetings occupies as many as 8 printed pages of the said judgement. This chain of meetings reached the climax in August 1914, i.e. after "Declaration of War" on 4th August 1914. Of these the last but one was held at Fresno (California) on 9th August which was addressed among others by Barkatullah (later the Vice President) and Ram Chand. "The audience was exhorted to leave for India at once; arms would be supplied in India on arrival and the time had come at last, while England was at war, to expel the British from India. Subscriptions were collected and a list of volunteers prepared in which 200 or 300 Sikhs promised to go to India at once."

The aggregate figures of those who beckoned the call of "do and die" ran into "some thousands" as per the said judgements.⁸

THE KOMAGATA MARU EPISODE

This episode with no apparent nexus with Ghadr Party *per se*, forms a vital link in the cause-effect cycle of developments in the denouement of the movement: It was purported to be an attempt plain and simple to circumvent the covert ban on the entry of Indians into Canada since 1907 in a big way. This ban itself had something to do with the Intelligence reports about seditious activities of Indian emigrants in Canada which was a part of British Empire despite its autonomous status as a Dominion.

To start with a Japanese ship "Komagata Maru" was hired by 'Baba' Gurdit Singh of Sarhali, District Amritsar, an enterprising businessman of the day. He floated a concern in the name and style of "Guru Nanak Steamship Company" for the purpose of the voyage. The *modus operandi* proposed for the purpose was to book the passengers direct from India to Canada to meet the crucial precondition of "direct sailing" imposed by authorities to exclude the Indians from entry into Canada since no such facility was in fact available, thereby safeguarding themselves against the blemish of racial discrimination.

There are reasons to believe that the organisers of the voyage as also most of the passengers had not expected a smooth landing at their destination points (Vancouver port) where it arrived in last week of May 1914. The ship was detained by Canadian authorities off the coast followed by hostile confrontations between passengers and the local Indians on one hand, and the Canadian authorities on the other, often reaching the brink. Ultimately, the ship was sent back along with its passengers with small mercies in the form of rations, coal, provisions etc.

This nightmare inflamed the passions of already restless emigrant Indians even before the passengers faced a bloody reception on its return to Calcutta in

7. Ibid., p. 123.

8. Ibid., p. 151.

last week of September 1914. The Ghadr Party expectedly took steps to rope in the passengers in its plan of insurrection and deputed Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna the Party President for a tie up. He proceeded to Japan carrying with him 200 pistols and 2000 rounds besides Ghadrite publications for delivery to the passengers at Yokohama port of Japan, which he did.

Interestingly, while Baba Bhakna was on his way to Japan, war between Germany and England broke out on 4.8.1914, which was also the moment of launching of Ghadr in India.

The British intelligence got the wind of all this and they made full and thorough preparations for the 'reception' of the ship at Calcutta, at the Budge Budge Ghat. It culminated in an indiscriminating firing by police on the totally unarmed peaceful passengers, some with their families and children killing at least 20, and injuring as many in the process, when the passengers refused to comply with the patently arbitrary command of police to 'board' the train which was only a ploy to place them under arrest.⁹

Expectedly the impact was tremendous on Indian national psyche, both inside the country as well as abroad.

BUDGE-BUDGE: VALIANTS EXCOMMUNICATED

Vide an Edict from Supreme Sikh Authority — The Holy Akal Takht!

The highest Spirituo-temporal Sikh institution, the Akal Takht was also hijacked by the alien rulers, through, their puppet 'Sardar Bahadur' Rur Singh, who in his capacity as its *Sarbrah* (Trustee) excommunicated the Budge-Budge victims for having resisted the divinely anointed English rulers.

The edict was rescinded by the Supreme Sikh Authority six years later, on 12th Oct., 1920, in the wake of liberation of the sacred Golden Temple, Amritsar from the clutches of the debauch '*pujaris*' holding the Budge-Budge valiants as 'True Sikhs' while denouncing Rur Singh as a debauch and a renegade.¹⁰

THE RETURN VOYAGE OF GHADRITES

"Before the departure of the main body of men from America it appears that a certain number had been sent on in advance."¹¹

They travelled back in a number of ships like "Nippon Maru", "Mexico Maru" and a few others. each making its scheduled stop at various ports *en route*, each of these stops being eventful.

One of these (only to illustrate the nature of journey), left U.S.A. for Hongkong on 29th August 1914 with 60 or 70 such passengers. The passengers spent most of the time on board committing the songs/poems of "*Ghadr-di-Gunj*" to memory and several meetings were held at which the British government

9. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Gurdev Singh Sidhu, *Komagata Maru : A Challenge to Colonialism — Key Documents*, Unistar Publishers, Chandigarh, 2005, pp. 15-16.

10. Roopinder Singh, *Hukamname... Sri Akal Takht Sahib*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2003, p. 64.

11. *Ghadr Documents*, Vol. I, p. 141.

in India was reviled. At Yokohama, Ram Rakha and Amar Singh are said to have left the ship in order to obtain arms and a new passenger came on board, namely, Pandit Parmanand of Jhansi (U.P.). The next stop was Kobe where a ship was met with a number of Indians on board from Vancouver. At Nagasaki Nidhan Singh (Chugha, Ferozepur) and Piara Singh (Langeri, Hoshiarpur) and three others left the ship with the intention of proceeding directly to Shanghai.

"The next stop was at Manila and there the passengers were met by Hafiz Abdulla president of the local Ghadr Society and two others. A meeting of Indians was held on shore which was addressed by Nawab Khan and Jagat Ram (of Haryana, Hoshiarpur). The latter is said to have delivered the following message:

"For sometime past we have been sending you the Ghadr newspaper in order to prepare you for the mutiny and now the time for mutiny has arrived. England is engaged in life and death struggle with Germany. With her attention thus occupied we can, without difficulty, 'drive the English out of India. Don't let this opportunity slip by you for you will never get another such for centuries. Join us now and be ready to kill or to be killed on arrival in India.'" A quantity of seditious literature was also distributed in the meeting.

"While the ship was at Manila a telegram was received from Nidhan Singh from Shanghai giving warning that a strict search would be instituted on arrival at Hong Kong both for arms and seditious literature. Consequently the passengers collected all the seditious papers on board and threw that in the sea. All revolvers and ammunition in the possession of passengers had been collected previously by the leaders."¹²

Arrival Back "Home"

Not surprisingly the British authorities had anticipated the implications of this influx of Ghadrates. Arrangements had been made for arrest and detention of all of them at the Indian ports. Some of these, like Kartar Singh, chose to land in Colombo (Ceylon) to evade arrest. '*Zail Ghar*' at Ludhiana (near the clock tower) was the screening cum interrogation centre (Ironically this historic building was demolished in 1970's for constructing a shopping centre instead). The leaders were kept under detention, while the rest were ordered to be interned i.e. confined to their respective villages. Consequently all the top leaders including the President (Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna) and the Vice-president (Baba Kesar Singh Thatgarh) were sent to jails, thus depriving the movement of its seasoned leadership — one of the important causes of its eventual 'failure'.

Weakened as it was thereby but paralysed not, being a true inheritor of the traditions of a '*Sangat*' — the holy congregation.

To fill in this void, efforts were initiated to contact the Bengal revolutionary group based at Varanasi. Ultimately Rash Bihari Bose of Hardinge Bomb Case

12. Ibid., pp. 141-142.

fame (1912) assisted by his aide Sachindra Sanyal were entrusted with the responsibility of top-most leadership. Consequently, a movement built brick by brick by thousands of 'nameless' workers was handed over to a new leadership at the most crucial stage. Leaving aside the merits, demerits or the repercussions of the aforesaid choice, it is a most befitting testimony to the spirit of self-denial and absolute lack of the craving to be star performers in the movement. There was not even a remote suggestion of dissent in the matter. An added attraction for the choice in favour of inviting Bengali leaders was the revolutionary fervent in Bengal; although concentrated mostly on individual acts of terrorism, they could very well be expected to provide pistols, bombs so badly needed for the success of the proposed uprising.

The activities undertaken by revolutionists thereafter were comprehensive in scope, encompassing the whole of North Western India where most of the British Indian army was stationed. The judges of the Tribunal listed as many as 17 such activities. To enumerate, only a few would suffice :—

- a) The seduction of students — the main focus centred around students of Khalsa and Islamia High Schools at Ludhiana which contributed a sizeable number of active revolutionists, some of them having been assigned most sensitive jobs, like maintaining active link with troops.
- b) The seduction of villagers — Dhudike village (then in Ferozepur, now in Moga District) was the meeting point of Ghadriles of Malwa belt. This is what the judges called 'Dhudike Gang'. Sangowal in Jullundur was the centre of revolutionists of Doaba region, spreading the tentacles of the movement in that region. Sursingh-Dadehar-Marhana villages in District Amritsar and (then) Lahore District covered the Majha zone. Besides a significant development the "Jatha" of (Bhai Sahib) Randhir Singh got affiliated with the movement. Initially outraged at the desecration of Gurdwara Rikab Ganj at Delhi by the Government for extending the precincts of (then) Viceroy House (Now *Rashtarpati Bhavan*) in 1911 i.e. during the construction of new capital at New Delhi (which till 1913 remained at Calcutta), the sect became part and parcel of the movement, playing a stellar role in the proposed rising on 19th February 1915 at Ferozepur Cantonment. Most of its members belonged to Narangwal — Gujjarwal-Sarabha belt of Ludhiana District.
- c) The seduction of troops — What deeply disturbed the government most was the degree of success of the Ghadriles in winning over the British Indian troops. The magnitude and sweep of this impact lies buried in secret chambers of the government under the glaze of indifference to this glorious saga of those who faced bullets after summary trials in Court Martials. There were rebellions '*en masse*' not only among troops stationed in India but also those in Malaya and Singapore.

Around Lahore the Mian-Mir cantonment where 23rd Cavalry was posted and Ferozepur where 26th PUNJABIS was stationed became active centres of Ghadrite activities. From 23 Cavalry alone as many as 12 servicemen were sentenced to death in one go at DAGSHAI and hanged in Ambala Centre Jail on 3.9.1915.

- d) The use of revolutionary literature alluded to above.
- e) The looting of treasuries — proposed but not accomplished.
- f) Collection of arms and manufacture of bombs.

The 'D' Day — 19th February 1915

On the basis of feedback from army units and the public in general the all important decision of an uprising on 21st February was taken on 12.2.15 in the Lahore headquarters of the Party under the stewardship of Rash Bihari Bose.

Accordingly messages were relayed to the various centres, also signifying the opening signal for insurrection. But in the meantime police had been able to penetrate into the innermost circle courtesy Kirpal Singh, a spy planted for the purpose. Somehow, the leaders came to know about the leakage of the date of 21st to the police. So on 16th or 17th February, the date of revolt was advanced to 19th February to pre-empt the government strike. But the wily Kirpal Singh again got a hint to this effect also on 19th morning and engineered a police raid on party headquarters, which materialized the same afternoon.

The Ghadrtes in general, however, being unaware of the aforesaid raid by police at Lahore went ahead as per their plans. A sizeable number assembled on the outskirts reeds of Ferozepur Cantonment under the overall coordinator Kartar Singh. He went into the army lines but learnt of the sea-change in the wake of the date-leakage and came back dejected to declare a dispersal. Interestingly, the "Jatha" of Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh consisting of 60 or 65 members, all dressed in dark blue wear, carrying a harmonium to give the look of a "Kirtani Jatha" had boarded the train for Ferozepur from Mullanpur (Dakha), (on 19.2.15) about 10 miles from Ludhiana; the nearest to Gujjarwal, Narangwal. (Many of them identified later were put on trial in the Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case).

The "Price"

The wheels of government machinery swung into top gear after having "nipped the evil in the bud."

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Punjab Governor (later notorious for having authored Jallianwala Massacre of 1919 and who was ultimately assassinated by Shahid Udham Singh in 1940), bared his fangs in manipulating a notification by British Parliament establishing a TRIBUNAL of one Chief and two special Commissioners' (not judges) with untrammelled powers both procedural and substantive. "*Na vakil, na daleel na appeal*" (Sans Counsel, Sans Argument, Sans Appeal).

(A) Lahore Conspiracy Cases

This "blank cheque" put at the disposal of the Tribunal, over-shadowed by

a rabid Anti Indian Punjab Governor was exploited to hilt. Of the 61 accused before it in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, as many as 24 were sentenced to death, 27 to transportation for life with forfeiture of property, 6 to lesser sentences and only four were acquitted.

Most of the judgements passed on the accused were quite casually worded, verging on the cryptic; they could not (possibly) have been able to bear the scrutiny of any appellate court. Be as it may, the question of award of death sentence to as many accused as 24, at one go attracted the attention of the highest authorities in India i.e., the Governor General. As for the legal formalities, the Punjab Governor being the statutory authority "duly confirmed" the sentences.

There was of course a provision for petition of mercy which was availed of by one or two out of 24. So more on pragmatic rather than legal considerations the matter went to the Governor General's Council.

The judgement had been pronounced on 13.9.1915. These 24 prisoners were put in the "death cells." The date of their execution was fixed in course of time as 5.10.1915. The "last night" was spent by them in shouting greetings with each other from their individual cells, reciting poems expressing the vindication of their resolve to die at the altar of liberty. Early morning of 5th October they were waiting for the parting knock of the warder with a bucket full of water for the "last bath" when instead, they were informed of the deferment of the executions.

What actually prompted the Governor General to intervene is thus explained by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna in his autobiography "*Jeewan Sangram*", he himself being one among these 24. "We learnt that Sh. Raghunath Sahai and other well wishers of the national cause who had, on their own been following the course of 'trial' constituted a Committee of Lawyers which went along with the relevant documents to Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, father of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru at Allahabad. Pandit Nehru opined that of these 24 there were as many as 17 who had been arrested before they set their feet on the Indian soil. They then met the Indian Legal Members of Viceroy Council, like Sir Ali Imam who were persuaded to reason with the Governor General resulting in the said screening of the case."¹³

When the case evidence was reviewed from a legal angle, the lacunae were too glaring to be ignored. The Tribunal had proceeded on the simplistic presumption that the acts of all the conspirators (accused) done "upto July August 1914 were acts of conspiracy to wage war acts thereafter when once the war started, acts in furtherance of war, and in abetment of such war."¹⁴

Under the Indian Penal Code the conspiracy charge attracts life sentence whereas waging war itself may be visited even by death sentence. *Prima facie* the Tribunal regarded the "Declaration of War" (*Ailan-e-Jang*) of 4-8-1915 as the clinching proof of *Waging of War* since all the subsequent criminal acts of conspirators would *ipso facto* fall in the category of acts of war *per se* by virtue

13. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Harish Jain, *First Lahore Conspiracy Case — Mercy Petition*, Vol. II, Unistar Publishers, Chandigarh, 2010, pp. 7-8.

14. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 340.

of this unequivocal assertion lending these acts the complexion of War.

Be as it may there was no limit to the dismay of men like Sir Michael O' Dwyer to see persons like Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, the "arch conspirator and war-monger" escaping the gallows whereas those unknown persons like three local collaborators from village Gilwali (Amritsar), namely Sardar Bakshish Singh, Sardar Surain Singh s/o Sardar Bur Singh and Sardar Surain Singh s/o Sardar Ishar Singh were sent to gallows (besides 4 leading revolutionists viz. Sardar Kartar Singh Sarabha, Sh. Vishnu Ganesh Pingle, Sardar Harnam Singh (Sialkot) and Sardar Jagat Singh of Sursingh (Amritsar).

The lessons of the post-judgement developments were 'duly' learnt by the Tribunal. This was visible even to the naked eye when they gave their verdict in the Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case.

(B) More Loyal than the King

Sikh aristocracy, ever at the beck and call of their British mentors went all out to shower tributes to the 'Guru blessed British authorities for having shown these thankless apostates their place and mercifully spared so many from the gallows which they all richly deserved, beseeching that no mercy be shown in the execution of such a lenient pronouncement by the Tribunal.

(C) Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case

In sharp and glaring contrast, the overall trend of sentences awarded was towards moderation, perhaps partly because most of the luminaries of the movement had already been dealt within the former case. Of the 74 tried 5 (actually 4) were sentenced to death, 18 to transportation for life, as many as 36 awarded lesser sentences, whereas the number of acquittals was 15.¹⁵

Later, there were subsequent trials in the series extending up to 4th Supplementary case. These cases dealt with a few odd accused who were arrested later (had been 'absconding').

Besides, there were a chain of related cases such as Mandi (H.P.) Conspiracy Case, Burma Conspiracy Cases (I and II), Banaras Conspiracy Cases I and II, Ferozeshahr Murder Case, Anarkali Murder Case, Jagatpur Murder Case, Nangal Kalan Murder Case, Padri Murder Case, Walla Bridge Assault Case and in U.S.A. — Chicago Conspiracy and San Francisco Conspiracy Cases.

(D) Court Martials

However as mentioned earlier the extent and magnitude of sentences imposed on army men who responded to the call of Ghadrites to rise in revolt, forty-one were shot dead in public at Singapore and three of them hanged there, twelve hanged at Ambala, while hundreds of them were transported for life to Andamans.

This writer has recently authored a book sub-titled *Soldiers' in Revolt*

15. *Khalsa Advocate*.

portraying a gamut of revolts in British Indian Army.¹⁶

It needs be mentioned that the Ghadriles while returning to India for *Ghadr* had been halting at the ports on the way and had openly approached the Indian troops stationed there for joining the movement.

(E) Was This all a "Conspiracy"?

Conspiracy is always hidden, secret, and covert; otherwise it ceases to be one. From the accounts relating to the origin and development of the movement, vividly portrayed in the Judgement of (First) Lahore Conspiracy Case, this dimension was wholly missing in this case. From day one, all was open, rather too open. The only exception which proverbially, proves the rule, was the choice of the date of uprising — 21st February, later 19th February 1915.

Presumably the conspirational dimension had something to do with the suspected "German connection" which had been dealt with under the heading "The connection of the revolutionists with Germany."

Unable to cite any evidence (which is quite understandable) the Tribunal found indications which point to the suggestion that there was some understanding that some assistance was rendered by individual Germans, and that the revolutionists considered themselves in league with the German enemies of the King Emperor.¹⁷

Now, of course, it is 'history' and there are on record quite a few instances to justify this suspicion. Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, describing the Komagata Maru episode says, "while it was on its way back, while it was anchored in Japanese port, since the war had started German submarine "Edmen" was feared to damage the ship. The Baba managed to secretly contact the German Council and settle a secret code to be employed to ward off such an eventuality."¹⁸

The second instance relates to Baba Hari Singh 'Usman'. He was among those had been left behind in U.S.A. to manage Yugantar Ashram. The Ghadriles struck an arms deal with a German firm to provide on cash a shipload of arms and ammunition. He was made incharge of the operation and started front USA on 15-4-1915 but due to unforeseen developments landed in Indonesia in September 1915 without accomplishing the task. (There he settled under the assumed name of Usman Khan, which ultimately gave him the identity of Hari Singh Usman. He played a vital role in forming Indian Independence League and in I.N.A. during the Second World War. He returned to India in October 1948 and died 'unnoticed' on 15-8-1969.)¹⁹

(F) "Waging of War"

Stung by the *suo moto* review of the death sentences by the Viceroy in the

16. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Harish Jain, *Ghadr Documents: Soldiers in Revolt*, Unistar Publishers, Chandigarh, 2013.

17. *Ghadr Documents*, Vol. I, p. 336.

18. *Ghadr Party Lehar*, p. 72.

19. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich (ed.), *Diary Baba Hari Singh Usman* (Autobiography in Punjabi), Tarak Bharti Parkashan Barnala, 2006, pp. 9-11.

First Case, the Tribunal by hindsight became "wiser" in the Second Case. While in the former it dealt with question of applicability of Section 121 of Indian Penal Code concerning WAGING OF WAR (admittedly a core issue), just in less than 3 pages²⁰ in the latter case they dwelt on the issue quite extensively *vide* "Editorial Note on the issue", pp. 392-411: Ghadr Documents, Vol. I.²¹

It may be surmised that the actual reason was the "rebuff", which was lying buried in the secret files, but the net outcome that only 7 out of 24 initially awarded death sentence were hanged, was well known. In the 17 page exposition, it was stated that since "in the present Case it has been argued by (defence) Counsel that even if the facts alleged are found to be established, they do not amount to acts of war, or attempts at war or abetment of war, but to a lesser offence, such as the conspiracy or preparation as the case may be" dwelt upon in length by present writer.²²

To those familiar with criminal trial, the said argument which is attributed to the defence counsel in this (second) case is a most common argument seldom missed in criminal trials — that the specified alleged acts even if proved, do not prove, *per se*, the grave (say murder) charge but a lesser offence (say culpable homicide). In any case it is inconceivable that as many as 7 defence lawyers would not have put this argument in relation to not even once for any one accused out of as many as 61.

The inference is obvious, that by its very nature, that charge "Waging of War" is a class by itself as it has political ramifications since it strikes at the roots of a political system by challenging its very legitimacy. That is why the 'Rule of Law' of which the Anglo-Saxon world is so proud, is given a go by while dealing with the revolutionists.

Accordingly there is some "sense" in the jibe hurled at the Punjab Governor by Sardar Bhagat Singh that... "since they were guilty to waging a war, they should not be hanged and be handed over to the firing squad of the army instead." (Letter addressed to him on 20-3-1931, i.e. 3 or 4 days before their execution).²³

At the end of the day, it goes to the credit of the Tribunal — that they characterised the Ghadrists as revolutionists and not terrorists or anarchists which were the words used worldwide while trying such like cases involving charges of treason or insurrection against the government of the day. It is a different matter, however, in essence this was a revolutionary movement since it sought to change the system as such and was not directed against same specified individual ruling the country.

Significantly, in the appeal before Lahore Court in Assembly bomb case,

20. *Ghadr Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 350-354.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 355-391.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 392-411.

23. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, *Bhagat Singh — The Eternal Rebel*, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, Sochna Bhawan, C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003, 2007, p. 163.

against the life sentence awarded to Bhagat Singh and Dutt, the judge observed.

“Bhagat Singh is a sincere revolutionary. I have no doubt, that is to say, he is sincere in the illusion that the world can be improved by destroying the social structure as it now stands and instituting for rule of law the unrestrained will of the individual.”²⁴

Saga of Jails

End of the trials was the end for only those who attained martyrdom, but not for the rest. Most of whom were sentenced to transportation for life, which was only a euphemism for spending the best part of life in the inhuman life in Cellular Jail in Andemans. The latter often envied the former who had ‘passed’ the test of patriotism, whereas they themselves were yet ‘on probation’. Aptly put by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna “that for a revolutionary, whether he be in jail or outside, faces challenges continuously since his struggle is basically against oppression and injustice.”²⁵ It shall be worthwhile to touch upon briefly on this jail interlude but in two separate phases viz. (a) relating to those convicted in the first case (Andeman) and (b) concerning the rest (Indian Jails).

This bifurcation is essential since the former were actually “transported” i.e. sent to Andemans, while the later were not, despite their too having been awarded similar sentences. The change in policy in the matter was not incidental. The former had, notwithstanding the brutal treatment, and the “iron curtain” of secrecy, had put sense in the heads of jail authorities, though at the cost of lives of at least 8 of them in addition to the unconceivable punishments, deprivations and humiliations hurled on the survivors. The net result, however, was that the Andeman jailors literally ‘raised their hands’ in despair and flatly refused to accommodate Ghadrte convicts of the subsequent cases. (A tribute!) .

(A) Travails in Andemans

Parodying the famous Urdu verse in praise of Kashmir being the only heaven on this earth, without exaggeration or ‘poetic license’ it can well be said “if there were a veritable hell on earth — it was this, this and (only) this.”

The very initial step of neither getting the prisoners medically examined, nor caring for the upper age, as stipulated, all those sentenced to transportation were transported there. Reaching there they were briefed by political prisoners like Ganesh Savarkar, and Vinayak Savarkar (the Savarkar Brothers from Maharashtra) that both the Jail Superintendent and the Jailor were barbaric. They were allotted inhuman quantity of labour work. Unable to cope up with the same, some of (even political) prisoners committed suicide.

“Ghadrtes gathered to ponder and resolved that they would do labour but only that which is within human capacity. To start with the *kohlu* (oil processing)

24. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Gurdev Singh Sidhu, *Hanging of Bhagat Singh*, Vol. I, Complete Judgement and other Documents, Unistar Publishers, Chandigarh, 2005, p. 55.

25. *Jeewan Sangram*, p. 48.

labour was held as inhuman and was to be declined.

Secondly, no disrespect be shown towards jail officials, but if they insult us, we shall retaliate in unison."

Bhan Singh's Case — is an apt one to show what transpired later. He had some learning in English. He used to be meticulous in performing the prescribed labour. One day while he was waiting for his turn to hand over his labour product a British guard uttered some remark, in English, derogatory to (our) national honour. Bhan Singh paid him back in the same currency (in English). Thereupon the guard arrayed him before the jailor. Jailor, who, ignoring the plea of Bhan Singh, slammed 6 months of solitary confinement, fetters, reduced diet and standing hand-cuffing all combined for the said period. One day while standing under the constraint of standing hand-cuffs, he was chanting "*Je tau prem khelan ka chao, sir dhar talee gali mori ao*" in a state of ecstasy. Berry, the ill-famed jailor happened to pass nearby who started abusing him. Bhan Singh, in protest refused to submit himself to standing handcuffs on the following day. Jailor arrived with a posse of 3 "Lambardars" and started belabouring Bhan Singh. Down below on ground floor his fellow prisoners were sitting in the enclosure for food. When they learnt, they all rushed above to rescue him. But the Jailor had already closed the gate of the line. They could not therefore enter but compelled the Jailor leave him alone. Though saved for the moment, the jailor got him thrashed the next day so much that he fell unconscious. Fellow prisoners resorted to work strike. He was shifted to jail hospital where his condition went from worse to worst.

"Seeing this, his fellow prisoners including myself (Sohan Singh Bhakna) started hunger strike besides work strike. In the meantime our comrades who had been convicted in Burma Conspiracy Case also came and they too joined us in work strike. It was winter: Jailor started torturing us by forcibly getting us removed to the water tank and got cold water thrown on us. Having got removed our blankets from our cells he would thereby sleep on bare cold wooden planks. Pandit Ram Rakha (of Sasoli, Hoshiarpur) died in the process.... Ultimately Bhan Singh succumbed to the brutal ordeal."²⁶

It was narrated by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna to the writer that Pandit Ram Rakha learnt on the way to Andaman from Burma that the jail authorities in Andaman do not allow the sporting of any religious symbol. He, despite being a Brahmin had long back eschewed the sacred '*janeu*' — the sacred thread. But he on purpose improvised one and on arrival in the jail resisted its removal leading to this fateful end to the episode.

Sometime in 1921 these Ghadrites were repatriated to 'Indian Jails', some of them landing after a while in Yervada (Poona). There, as per jail rules, they were made to sport caps instead of turbans. When they resisted, they were forcibly disrobed. The prisoners went on hunger strike. Pandit Parmanand (Jhansi) and Sh. Hirde Ram {Mandi (H.P.)} their fellow Ghadrites also joined it. Much as they

26. Ibid., pp. 51-52.

were dissuaded by us that it was a matter of turban/cap which did not touch them, they did not budge. This symbolised the principled love and affection amongst us Ghadrtes, who viewed even the religious distinctions from the angle of a shared identity.²⁷

So much for the veritable hell, the Andaman Cellular Jail !

(B) Subsequent Cases — Indian Jails

The judgement of the Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case (Second Case) was pronounced on 30-03-1916. They were shifted to Multan Jail on 3rd April, 1916. "But before their transfer, the religious symbols (*Kakars*) of the (Sikh) prisoners had been removed in Lahore jail itself."²⁸

Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh, a life convict in the case had given a first hand account of the ordeal in Multan jail where they were kept till July 1917. He had to resort to a hunger strike as a protest against inhuman treatment extending to 40 days during which he denied himself not only all kind of food but also water!²⁹

They were then shifted to Hazari Bagh (Bihar). While on way to Hazari Bagh, they were to pass through Ludhiana, the native district of many of them. Baba Sajjan Singh (of Narangwal, Ludhiana) has narrated a telling anecdote of their train's stoppage at Ludhiana station, in his brief autobiography. "My district was there at hand and I looked all around to pin point some familiar face. But so much was the dread in the air that none would venture near about our train. None would share a look with us even from a distance, nor exchange a greeting. We learnt later that the government and its lackeys had spread the word around that these persons who fight with the government had ceased to be Sikhs!"³⁰

Hazari Bagh was chosen as the most remote spot to imprison these convicts. There too the jail atrocities continued. Ultimately Ghadrtes planned a jail break and on the intervening night of 8/9 March 1918, 18 of them succeeded in breaking loose from the jail. Two anecdotes depicting the scenario of that all-important jail-escape are quite revealing of the awe in which they were held by the jail staff.

First one — when jail alarm was sounded. The jail guards were ordered to *deposit* the firearms in the armoury lest the fleeing Ghadrtes take away their rifles!

Second One — The Ghadrtes in their plan of successful jail braking had planned a loud chanting of '*Shabads*' so as to drown any sound of shouting etc. from either side. Once, after this escape, one evening jail warder felt that their *shabad* recitation was a bit louder than usual, he at once ran to the Jailor telling him that once again those Sikhs are chanting the "run away *Mantra*"!

27. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

28. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Sita Ram Bansal (eds.), *Atam Katha: Ghadri Baba Harnam Singh Kala Sanghian* (Kapurthala), Lokgeet Parkashan, Chandigarh 2011, p. 35.

29. Ibid., p. 36.

30. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Sita Ram Bansal (eds.), *Atam Katha: Baba Sajjan Singh Narangwal*, Lokgeet Parkashan, Chandigarh, 2011, p. 33.

Of these Ghadrites one Baba Harnam Singh (Kala Sangian, Kapurthala) an ex-soldier remained in prison for 21 years continuously, and his property remained confiscated till 2011 when the writer succeeded in getting it compensated at its present market price through a P.I.L. (Public Interest Litigation) in Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh.

The Rich Legacy

The indefatigable Babas, proverbial for their low profile and all encompassing pursuits serving spiritual, economic, educational causes, and endearing manners, had to be seen and observed first hand to be truly understood. Each in his own way left the life much richer wherever he lived and endeavoured. It had something to do with their world outlook or what is called 'Weltanschauung' in German. Transcending their rustic roots, they evolved an all encompassing outlook personified in their activities in general but perhaps in one of the cardinal principles of Ghadr Party — that if any member of the Party is living in a country and a struggle for freedom of that country is launched, it shall be his bounden duty to join it.³¹ Practical illustration of the same is provided by involvement of Baba Hari Singh Usman in freedom struggle of Indonesia against Dutch imperialism for which he was sentenced to be kicked, to death.³² Baba's both Indonesian sons were not 'far behind': They joined Indian National Army — and the elder one died fighting for the liberation of his *Father-land*!³³

Of the Histories of Freedom Struggle

In the matter of history of India's struggle for freedom, very few if any, of the historians had seriously taken note of the movements other than those launched by Gandhi. This was possibly the only way to perpetuate the myth of "blood less" consummation of the freedom struggle.

But how facile is this presumption can be seen by taking into account the extent of bloodshed in connection with non-cooperation movement alone. The movement was launched in 1919 by Gandhi and was "suspended" in February 1922 by him, without taking any other Congress leader into confidence. The ostensible reason for the abrupt withdrawal was the killing of 21 policemen by the Congress agitators by burning a police station at Chaura-Chauri (UP) on February 5, 1922. As many as 175 persons were hanged by the government on 6.1.1923 in connection with this occurrence alone. Besides, on April 13, 1919, at least 464 persons were killed and more than 1200 wounded in the indiscriminate firing at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar. Just a tip of iceberg!

Be as it may, the historians, as a class have been consistently indifferent to the revolutionary movements including the mass revolutionary movement organised by the *Ghadr* Party during 1914-15. Thus for all intents and purposes the "official"

31. *Jeewan Sangram*, p. 32.

32. *Diary Baba Hari Singh Usman*, p. 99.

33. *Ibid.*

histories hover around Congress and Gandhi.

Apparently, it could be the hangover of the Gandhian disdain for the revolutionaries often bordering on contempt. This kind of attitude on his part was manifested quite explicitly in September 1929, when it was Gandhi and Gandhi alone who declined to join the national mourning in honour of Martyr Jatin Das, an associate of Shahid Bhagat Singh, who died after a prolonged hunger strike in Lahore Central Jail on September 13, 1929. Even leaders like Mr. Jinah had joined the national mourning.

This was sought to be justified on the purported grounds of Gandhi's "scrupulous" adherence to the doctrine of *Ahimsa*. But how then could one interpret the historical fact that same very Gandhi had worked voluntarily as a Recruiting Sergeant for the British Imperial Army during the First World War? He had, then worked day and night even at the cost of his health.. He went all out to allure the Indian youth to join British Army, which could, as part of its "duty", be deployed to oppress even the fellow Indians struggling for freedom from British rule.

Lest this be taken as a conjectural proposition, there is an actual instance to substantiate the above proposition in regard to the concept of "duty" enjoined upon by Gandhi on the Indian Soldiers of British Army vis-a-vis the freedom movement. During the course of Civil Disobedience movement launched by Gandhi, there was an episode dated April 23, 1930, at Peshawar (Now in Pakistan). A crowd of protesters refused to disperse. Hence a platoon of 2nd Battalion of 18th Garhwal Rifles was deployed and was ordered to fire at the protesters to disperse them. The platoon commanded by (then) Havildar Major Chandar Singh bluntly refused to obey the order protesting that they, being soldiers, shall not fire at a peaceful crowd. They were routinely court marshalled and sentenced to jail terms extending from 10 to 14 years and were transported to Andamans.

When the negotiations to effect a compromise between the Congress and the Government started, Gandhi stoutly refused to plead for clemency or mercy to the Garhwali soldiers since "they have violated their oath of loyalty as a soldier". Consequently, Gandhi-Irwin Pact contained no such gesture of amnesty or commutation of sentence for them. The same "sin" was latter committed by the Indian Soldiers of British Army joining I.N.A. during World War II and in February 1946 by Naval Ratings!

Concerning these few facts from the flux of freedom struggle, a look at the books of history may be in place to ascertain as to how these events are dealt with therein. A four volume treatise *History of Freedom Movement in India* by Dr. Tara Chand published by Publication Division, Government of India (1992 Edition) may fairly be relied upon as a representative sample.

The episode in respect of Garhwali soldiers is taken note of on page 126, Vol. IV of the publication. Their refusal to fire and the resultant punishments also find a mention. However there is no allusion to the stand taken by Gandhi in the process of negotiating amnesty for agitators which is invariably a part of settlement of any agitation or struggle.

It goes without saying that for all intents and purposes, these Garhwali Soldiers were the true adherents to the principle of *Ahimsa*, but not so, for Gandhi an apostle of truth and non-violence.

About Gandhi's recruiting campaign, Dr Tara Chand did make a one line mention on page 456, Vol. III. But the crux of this debate is that in the entire gamut of 30 pages devoted to "*Philosophical Background of Gandhiji*" (pages 190-221, Vol. III) these two episodes do not figure anywhere. Evidently it was incumbent upon the eminent historian to reconcile these episodes with the ideology of Gandhi.

To quote Dr Tara Chand, "While his achievements during his own lifetime and for India were undoubtedly so remarkable as to entitle him a place in the front rank of the historical celebrities, his teaching of truth and non-violence and his own sublime example bear upon them the stamp of immortality". (*Emphasis ours - Ed.*) (Page 191, Vol. III).

Obviously, it was deemed expedient by the astute historian to swamp such inconvenient facts underneath the foliage of verbiage.

On the wider question of treatment of movements by historians in general, once again the instance of non-cooperation movement would be apt. It is very well explained in Chapter XI of Vol. III. The origin of movement is rightly attributed to adoption of Rowlatt Act by the Central Assembly on 25.3.1919. It was a set of "Black Laws" which sought to ban even the peaceful protests against the authorities. Also on page 456 Vol. III it is noted that these measures had been felt necessary by the Government in view of revolutionary movements in Bengal, Maharashtra and of the Ghadrites in Punjab during the First World War.

It shall be apposite to advert to the magnitude of threat from Ghadrites and other revolutionary movements in the post-war years, as it was then perceived by the Government of the day.

The very fact that the government had to devise draconian laws like Rowlatt Act even at the cost of alienating the staunch supporters of their war efforts like Gandhi, who had forsaken his *Ahimsa* too in the hope of some "reforms", speaks volumes for their dread of the potential trouble makers.

The dread that *Ghadr* movement had evoked among the white rulers is very well stated in the Judgements of conspiracy cases. The concluding lines of Part III, C III (4) "The Seduction of Troops" of the judgement of First Case, read as under :—

"Frantic efforts were made in all sorts of places to induce troops to join and in some places with success, and a rising of a serious nature seems only to have been averted by the (police) raid of the 19th, which robbed the revolutionists of their head quarters, and scattered their leaders."

Now while dealing with Non-cooperation movement, the learned author had taken cognisance of the fact that the catalyst of this movement was Rowlatt Act. Dr Tara Chand had, also, taken note of the fact that the Rowlatt act was motivated by the threat posed to the British Rulers by revolutionary movements in

Bengal, Maharashtra and by the returned immigrants, the *Ghadrites*, during the First World War.

Paradoxically the *Ghadr* movement, which had unnerved the British ruler to extent indicated above, receives only a casual mention from Dr. Tara Chand in Vol. III (pages 443-445). According to the learned historian, it was a brainchild of Lala Hardial, on whose departure from America on 25.3.1914 to evade arrest, it just vanished into thin air. Thus according to Dr Tara Chand the *Ghadr* Movement died 5 months before the start of war in August 1914. This indicates the blinkered approach to the revolutionary movements presumably due to blind adherence to the delusion of a 'peaceful and bloodless' transfer of power in 1947.

Additionally, if one cares to peruse the account of Non-Cooperation movement given by Dr Tara Chand, (Vol. III, Chapter XI), the mode of "suspension" of the movement by Gandhi on 5.2.1922 is quite revealing. He, unilaterally, without consulting anyone else, called it off and then the meeting of Congress Working Committee was called on 12.2.1922 to "confirm the decision". He did not care to consult anyone, not even Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru who was in jail in connection with the same movement, before taking the momentous decision. Whatever be the rationale behind this whimsical decision, it could hardly be called democratic. Indeed, on more than one historic occasions, Gandhi attached all the importance to his "inner voice" and nothing else. Importantly, this prerogative was exclusive to him and to none else who mattered !

As for his decision to extend unconditional support to the British during the First World War in the hope of soliciting some reward of concessions after the War, he totally failed to fathom the "inner voice" of the white masters who "rewarded" us with Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh massacre. It needs to be noted here, that even moderates like Mr. M. A. Jinah were firmly in favour of extending support in the war efforts only if the British made a firm, categorical commitment promising specific concessions for Indians after the War.

Regarding the attitude of *Ghadrites* and other revolutionaries during the First World War, they believed that this was the golden opportunity to expel the white masters from India. This very strategy had to be emulated by Gandhi during Second World War while giving a call to British to "Quit India" and to countrymen to "Do or Die" thereby vindicating the approach of *Ghadrites* and other revolutionary parties in a parallel situation.

The "Quit India" movement, however, lost its momentum within a year or so in the face of brutal repression, which resulted in shooting down of hundreds and thousands of agitators by the Government Police and the Army.

Then what actually compelled the British to pack and leave in August 1947? To find an answer to this, let us have a look at the panorama of our freedom struggle in the twentieth century :

- The Ghadr Movement of 1914 -15 fizzled out.
- The Non-cooperation Movement was suspended without any tangible outcome.

- The Civil Disobedience Movement had culminated in Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March 1931, which was presented by Gandhi as "victory both of the government and the people" (*Emphasis ours*).
- The Quit India Movement of 1942 also petered out.
- The onslaught of Indian National Army of Netaji chanting "*Dilli Chalo*" was halted and repulsed far away from Delhi, but - it was this very "retreat and defeat" which climaxed the freedom movement.

The Finale

The Red Fort — the "Lal Qilla", symbol of Mughal Empire at Delhi was converted into trial room for the Heroes of I.N.A. Dhillon, Sehgal and Shahniwaz.

The trial indicting these former officers of British Army for having joined the "enemy" thereby violating the sanctity of their oath of loyalty to the King Emperor was intended to have deterrent impact on personnel of armed forces to pre-empt any such proclivity in future.

The trial incensed not only the common people to make them jump in to defend these valiant sons of India but also drew the ire of even the traditionally apolitical soldiery of India.

Every nook and corner of the country resounded with spontaneous shouting of the slogan:

"Lal Qile Se Aee Awaz, Sehgal Dhillon Shahniwaz"

This electrified the whole atmosphere.

On February 18, 1946 most of the sailors in the Royal Indian Navy in Bombay harbour went on strike for higher wages. The next day 3000 of those "mutineers", as the British considered them, marched around Bombay stirring tens of thousands of ardent street supporters.

The tricolour instead of the Royal Union Jack, fluttered on the royal navy ships HIMS Talwar and HIMS Lahore as well as from the hats of many defiant, jubilant sailors who called themselves members of I. N. N. (Indian National Navy) in emulation of I.N.A.

It was far from being a coincidence that the Naval revolt broke out on 18th February in the morning, and in the same evening Mr. Attlee the British Prime Minister makes a statement in House of Lords that a Cabinet Mission was being sent to India for negotiations with Indian leaders to work out the modalities of the transfer of power.

According to the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, during whose regime India became free, it was the I.N.A. and the R.I.N. Mutiny of February 18-23, 1946 that made the British realize that their time was up in India.

An extract from a letter written by Mr. P.V. Chakraborty, former chief justice of Calcutta High Court on March 30, 1976 reads thus: "When I was acting as Governor of Bengal in 1956, Lord Clement Attlee, who was the British Prime Minister in postwar years and who was responsible for India's freedom, visited India and stayed in Raj Bhawan Calcutta for two days..." I put it straight to him

like this: "The Quit India Movement of Gandhi practically died out long before 1947 and there was nothing in the Indian situation at that time, which made it necessary for the British to leave India in a hurry. Why then did they do so?"

In reply, Attlee cited several reasons, the most important of which were the I.N.A. activities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, which weakened the very foundation of the British Empire in India and the RIN Mutiny which made the British realize that the Indian armed forces could no longer be trusted to prop up the British. When asked about the extent to which the British decision to quit India was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's 1942 movement, Mr Attlee's lips widened in smile of disdain and he uttered slowly, "Minimal".

(*The Tribune of Sunday*, Feb. 12, 2006, 'Spectrum', p. 11.)

On February 22, 1946 the "Mutineers" were told that only "unconditional surrender" would be accepted. Gen. R.M. Lockhart in command at Bombay had "ample force available". Field Marshal Wavell, the Viceroy declared that "If ships opened fire, they will have to be sunk".

Sardar Valabbhai Patel, the "iron man" of Congress, went out to the ships at Bombay and persuaded the sailors to surrender unconditionally without firing, which they did. Sailors in Karachi port also followed the lead of their Bombay comrades and they too surrendered.

But it was not before the thousands of citizens of Bombay had come out on the streets to protest against the palpable threat to the sailor mutineers. Indiscriminate firing on the protesting crowds had left more than 200 dead. Most aptly, to many of Indians this looked like a replay of 1857. Urdu poet Sahir then proclaimed: "*Janta ka lahu faujon se mila, Faujon ka lahu janta se mila*".

This confluence of blood of civilians and soldiers scared the White masters and disturbed their sleep. The spectre of 1857 loomed large before them. They hastened to finally make up their minds to wind up and leave. This could very well have been the last straw on the (white) camel's back!

To conclude, the modest object of this presentation is to highlight the multi-centred and multidimensional character of the freedom struggle.

A SIKH MANIFESTO ? A READING OF THE GHADAR LITERATURE

*Darshan S. Tatla**

Among the literary heritage of the Ghadar movement, there is large corpus of prose and poetry which raises several kinds of issues for interpretation. From November 1913 onwards the *Ghadar* weekly became a vehicle for Sikh workers to voice their resentments against the British rule in India. From government reports which tried to bar the weekly's distribution in Punjab and in many other countries, we know now hundreds of addresses to which the weekly was sent, and especially to the *gurdwaras* in the Far East countries. At places, it was a collective readership. Such poetry appeared in the *Ghadar* weekly in Urdu and then mainly in Punjabi language starting in November 1913 and the tradition of carrying such poems in subsequent issues continued till the famous Indo-German conspiracy trial of 1917 in San Francisco forced closure of the paper. Even as the weekly was split into two factions during months of 1917, and its re-appearance from 1923 onwards, renamed as Hindustan Ghadr, poetry remained integral part of this paper till 1947.

One notable feature of this literature, somewhat surprisingly for a movement dedicated to armed insurrection to liberate India from the British rule, poetry forms a considerable part. As the movement was launched through the Ghadar weekly newspaper from San Francisco, poems became regular feature of the weekly's contents along with comments upon contemporary developments and some regular features. Readers with knowledge of Urdu and Punjabi would read these poems aloud for other listeners. On occasions someone would recite a poem in the *gurdwara divan* [congregation]. It was, on the whole, inspiring words, in popular parlance calling upon readers to rebel for a noble cause and the noble cause was the freedom of India.

These weekly contributions of poems soon accumulated in numbers. Collected poems were then systematically issued as an anthology known as *Ghadar di Goonj* ('echoes of revolution'). Over the years seven such booklets were issued in a series starting in 1914 when the Ghadar Ashram issued its first anthology under the title *Ghadar di Goonj*. This was produced in considerable numbers, Har Dayal talked of thousands of such tracts for propaganda produced by 'our peasants.' A second series was issued in 1916, followed by series number 3 in 1918. Although there is record of series number 4 and 5, of these one is a long

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poem, other has not been identified properly, while number 6 and 7 were issued in 1933 and 1931 respectively. Each series was printed in large quantity first print orders were said to be in excess of 10,000 copies each. These poems as well some others are now collected together in *Ghadar lehar di kavita* [Poetry of the Ghadar movement] edited by Kesar Singh Kesar¹ Prose writings from the Ghadar weekly is also now available through a Punjabi book, *Ghadar lehar di vartak* [Prose of the Ghadar movement] edited by Kirpal Singh Kasel.² As with most other commentaries, this paper also concentrates upon the Ghadar literature during the period of November 1913 to 1917. For poems it draws upon first two anthologies—which collect poems appearing in the Ghadar weekly during its first three years and in a sense, true representative of the movement than later poems. The first two series of poems collected as *Ghadar di Goonj* have become very well-known.

Putting together the prose and poetry of the movement owe much to the effort on a single dedicated individual, Gyani Kesar Singh. Kesar Singh was a creative writer whose several novels sketch the Ghadar movement in its various phases, after his settlement in Vancouver he dedicated considerable period of his life gathering Ghadar literature from various sources.³ Kesar Singh's own life reads like a trajectory of early generation of Sikhs as he first migrated to the Far East in the 1930s, took part in Indian nationalist activities there and then went to Canada for permanent settlement. In gathering sources and stories relating to the Ghadar movement, Kesar Singh's task was not easy as such sources remain as scattered as the movement's spread across several continents; from San Francisco in West Coast of North America, to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Moscow, Berlin and Nairobi while a vast depository of government files are at India Office Records of British Library in London.

The poems in *Ghadar di Goonj* are written by various authors. Poem cannot be reliably attributed to an individual poet as these appeared in various issues of the *Ghadar* weekly anonymously. Among the main contributors, we know it was Bhagwan Singh who wrote more than others, other significant contributors were Harnam Singh Tundilat [writing under the pseudonym of Punjabi Singh], Munsha Singh Dukhi, Jawala Singh, Kesar Singh, and Wasakha Singh besides minor contributors. Most of these poems are now collected in the Punjabi book *Ghadar Lehar di Kavita* [Poetry of the Ghadar movement] edited by Kesar Singh Kesar who assembled them in some order from various lists provided by Gyani Kesar Singh. Altogether there are some 350 poems—dating from early 1913 to 1932 period. Kesar has provided a list of authors at the end, most poems are given the source and date as these appeared originally. Obviously there is much careful work still waiting especially in matching each poem to an individual poet.

As far as prose is concerned, again most of columns were commentaries

1. Kesar Singh Kesar [ed.], *Ghadar Lehar di Kavita*, Patiala : Punjabi University, 1995.

2. Kirpal Singh Kasel [ed.], *Ghadar Lehar di Vartak*, Patiala : Punjabi University, 2008.

3. Giani Kesar Singh, *Aatam Katha* (Punjabi), Chandigarh, Lokgeet Parkashan, 2001.

and cannot be ascertained as to their authors. Until April 1914, Har Dayal wrote regular columns in his characteristic Urdu which, it is believed, was translated by Kartar Singh Sarabha into Punjabi to appear in the Gurmukhi edition of the paper. Among regular features was the first page column of '*angan di guahi*' [The evidence of statistics] which gave figures for the British rule's burden upon India, in terms of financial drainage, deteriorating economic conditions of common people, and so on. Political commentaries usually followed upon recent events in India and around the world. A sample of columns for the first four weeks fairly represents the pattern of all subsequent issues of the paper. As Har Dayal left for Europe, his place was taken by Ram Chandra. Starting in August 1914, large number of Ghadar activists left for India to wage their declared war against the British rule, and the exodus continued till a small number remained behind. The *Ghadr* in its new name as *Hindustan Ghadr* continued to preach a violent revolution until 1916 when due to factional rivalry Bhagwan Singh started another weekly *Yugantar* as a parallel paper until both papers were closed when Ram Chandra, Bhagwan Singh along with the remaining staff were arrested in June 1917 and tried under the Indo-German Conspiracy.

Unlike Har Dayal, who was associated with the movement and the newspaper for a brief period, Bhagwan Singh as a major contributor and activist of the Ghadar party deserves to be better known but has attracted no serious scholarly attention. Born in a small village in Amritsar district, he was educated at Updeshak College, Gujjaranwala –an institution where he passed his Budhi and Gyani examinations and during this training undertook many tours to preach sharing platforms with Ajit Singh and others. As a young man he was becoming familiar with 'nationalist' ideas. Then he migrated to Hong Kong where he served as a *granthi* for some time soon becoming a well-known rhetorician noticed by English army officers. While singing hymns to the congregation, it was accepted practice to combine sacred hymns with popular poetry as and when a direct appeal was necessary to the audience.⁴ At some stage Bhagwan Singh started composing his own poetry under pseudonym of 'Pritam.' As a religious functionary, Bhagwan Singh was thoroughly familiar with Sikh religious practices and his poetry is directly derived from Sikh heroic tradition. In fact the bardic tradition as it evolved through *dhadis*, *ragis* and *caveeshari* modes –is common to all Ghadar poets who shared the background from rural population of Punjab with the *qissa* folklore as dominant mode of popular entertainment. Like Bhagwan Singh, other contributors to the Ghadar poetry were all Sikhs –hence it is not surprising to find numerous reference points and expressions which are suffused with the common theology, history and cultural heritage of the Sikh community.

The Ghadar prose and poetry has attracted several commentaries and there is almost consensus about its core message –a virulent and patriotic fervour for an India free from the colonial rule. In an earlier commentary, Vatuk [1969],

4. See Bhagwan Singh's personal statement at Desh Bhagat Yadgar Library.

a veteran scholar of Ghadar located in these songs a folk tradition written in a direct and revolutionary style. He noted how, 'its publication was like a bomb-shell' for readers and they responded with mobilisation. As its 'copies were sent free, its demand was so great...some workers gave almost half their salaries.' Much later Ramnath [2005] pointed how Ghadar songs called for revolution and this echo travelled around the world reverberating in such far-off places as Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, Yokohama, Manila, Rangoon, Panama City, Seattle, and Vancouver, summoning the Indians home, which 'raised *desi* diasporic consciousness to new heights.' Other studies have pointed out the reception of such poems across the Sikh diaspora communities who responded with financial help and in some cases men joined the movement. In a pioneering effort, Juergensmeyer [1977] suggested the Ghadar literature as expression of anger and yearning of a diasporan community for an honourable place in the world. There are several other commentaries available upon the Ghadar prose and poetry in particular how it initiated a 'progressive' or 'marxian' trend in postcolonial Punjabi literature.⁵ In a volume edited for the 100th anniversary Tejwant Gill [2013] offers to place Ghadar literature in the context of Punjabi literary tradition of early 20th century, while Parmbir Gill [2013] has questioned an increasing trend of reading this literature as the rise of secular consciousness.

This paper aims to explore the Ghadar poetry in two ways; first it tries to locate its lineage to understand the strategy and emphasis of this poetry on martyrdom and sacrifices. Although common knowledge among commentators that most of the Ghadar poetry is the work of Sikhs who wrote in the folklore tradition, they have not paid sufficient attention to the specific cultural and religious milieu of poets as its composers. While commentators have rightly emphasised how poetry became a vehicle for mobilisation, they have not paid close attention to its popularity based upon poets' skilful use of familiar phraseology from the Sikh past. Second, the paper seeks to know how these Sikh poets came to imagine India as their motherland. Most commentaries just assume that they were 'patriotic Indians,' thus avoiding the problematic issue of their provincial identity and how it was negotiated to arrive at a transcendent 'Indian' identity.

By addressing these two issues we can begin to appreciate the much applauded 'radicalism' of the Ghadar literature as a conscious intervention in the prevailing ethos of Sikhs' outlook. The paper then makes a case for reading the Ghadar literature and its poetry as a 'Sikh manifesto' –an appellation which at once captures the novelty of the Ghadar rhetoric and finds for this genre a more appropriate place in the evolving Punjabi literary tradition –as a diasporan Sikh imagining and intervention. Treating it as a manifesto, its explicit political message along with its inherent ambiguities and contradictions are brought into sharp focus. However, our first task is to get familiar with the main motifs of this poetry.

5. Surjit Singh, 'Ghadar Lehar di Kavita', *Parkh*, 1-2, 2012, pp. 126-35.

The Ghadar Literature: Main Themes

While reading through Ghadar prose and *Ghadar di Goonj* poems one comes across some striking characteristics which are a complete departure from contemporary Punjabi writings of that period. First distinguishing feature is its diasporic setting and these are compositions of labouring men or working class Punjabis. Studies on the background of the Ghadar movement emphasise how Punjabis worked in lumber industries of British Columbia, Oregon, Washington, while in California they were mainly farm workers. Although these were rewarding jobs in terms of money, their life was full of privations. As men, they were denied to call their families to join them. Both Canadian and U.S. immigration policies ensured it so. In addition, they faced daily experiences of racial attitude of white fellow workers who did not hesitate to stamp them down and showed contempt for Punjabis' life style, clothes and avoided company. Few exceptions were of subversive kind admirably captured by a recent study by Shah 2011. Working experiences of Punjabis were captured in Ghadar poems; one or two example will suffice to illustrate them.⁶

As one reads through, there is shared sense of deep felt dishonour by writers of this literature. Several poems tell how the world calls them 'coolies,' and they feel ashamed by this label. Although as a matter of fact, Sikhs generally spared this epithet, with many other ways of taunting them handy, such as turbaned Sikhs were called 'rag heads.' Poems repeatedly seek to highlight this wretched state of migrant Punjabis' lives. Humiliation was common shared trait of most Punjabis, 'called coolies and thieves, we are treated like dogs.' As one reads further, it becomes clear that poets' aim is to connect this dishonour with the conditions at home. Humiliation abroad was due to slavery of India under the yoke of the British rule. The subjugation of Indian by a foreign power is directly related to their diasporic woes. This is the connection underlined by several kinds of expressions in these poems. Even if we stay in these foreign lands for several

6. ਆਲੂ ਪੁਟਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੈਸਾ ਜੁੜੇ ਨਾਹੀਂ, ਗੋਡੀ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਗੋਡੇ ਲਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ
ਫੱਟੇ ਚੁਕਦੇ ਚੁਕਦੇ ਚੁਕ ਪੈ ਗਈ, ਵੀਰੋ ਕਾਲਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਧੌਲੇ ਵਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
ਪੈਸਾ ਜੁੜੇ ਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ, ਝਿੜਕਾਂ ਸਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
ਪਏ ਚੀਨ ਅਫਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਭੌਂਦੇ, ਵੱਜਨ ਨੌਕਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਭੈੜੇ ਹਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
ਕੀ ਕੁਛ ਖਟਿਆ ਜੇ ਮਿਰਕਣ ਵਿਚ ਆਕੇ, ਦੇਸ਼ ਛੱਡਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
ਕੁਲੀ ਕੁਲੀ ਕੈਹ ਕੇ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਨਕ ਚਾਹਤੇ, ਵੀਰੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਬੇਸ਼ਰਮ ਕਮਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ।

(ਪੰਨਾ 133, ਦੁਖੀਆ ਸਿੰਘ, 23 ਜੂਨ 1914)

(Collecting potatoes from farms, we have not earned much, our knees bent with hard labour
Lifting timber our backs are bent, our youth turned into old age
Labouring wages don't make us rich, for years we have borne insults
Scattered from China to Africa, we are hurt and have gone down over the years
What have we earned in coming to America? Having left our country for years now
Everywhere they hate us calling Coolie! Coolie! we are not ashamed enough.)

ਆਏ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਪੈਸੇ ਦੇ ਕਮੋਣ ਨੂੰ, ਬੈਠੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਸਾਰਾ ਹੀ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਨੂੰ।
ਔਖੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਪੈਸਾ ਕਿਉਂ ਲੁਟਾਵਨਾ, ਜਾਲਮ ਫਰੰਗੀ ਮਾਰ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਾਵਨਾ।

(We came to America to earn wealth, while the British are determined to cheat us all
Struggling through hard work and then betray our wealth, let us perish the Feringhis soon.)

years, there will be no satisfaction in such living.⁷

This was a painful realisation apparent to most of them as families were denied the right to join these single labouring men. By such arguments poets wanted to mobilise Sikhs in cooperation with other Indians against the British rulers.⁸ However, the call for mobilisation was not straight forward process. Poets were aware of vast gulf and disunity among various classes of Indians, division primarily along religious differences but also due to castes and regions. A further issue was the weakness of Indian leaders who could not confront the British Empire in military terms. The resistance through peaceful means as a strategy was obviously wrong as far as Ghadar poets were concerned. These issues were addressed in many poems. An obvious solution was a united front; hence calls upon Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims to unite, to ask them to forget their differences for a common cause. While Hindu temples and mosques were generally referred to, particular references to gurdwaras were more emphatic and specific. Thus Sikh readers were told how the English administrators had appointed a *Sarbrah* [Caretaker] for the holiest Sikh shrine, the Golden Temple, Amritsar adding comments that he has almost sold this sacred institution to the *feringhis*. Much of poetic rhetoric was directed at the hypocrisy of religious preachers, who are mouthpieces of the English administrators. This was rhetoric for an overriding cause while recognising religious differences and calls for unity, it was the role of

7. ਕੁਲੀ ਕੁਲੀ ਪੁਕਾਰਦਾ ਜਗ ਸਾਨੂੰ, ਸਾਡਾ ਝੁਲਦਾ ਕਿਤੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?
ਕੀਕੂੰ ਬਚਾਏ ਸਦਾ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਰਹਿਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?
ਵਾਈ ਟੋਟਰੂ ਖਾ ਗਏ ਖੇਤ ਸਾਡਾ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

(We are called coolies in countries abroad, Why there is no flag of ours own anywhere?
Will we always live the life of slaves? Why do we not know the science of politics?

A handful people have taken control of our land, Why is not there a caretaker of Hindustan?).

ਗੋਰੇ ਕਰਨ ਪਸਿੰਦ ਨਾ ਕਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ, ਦੇਉ ਕਾਲਤੇ ਹਥ ਵਖਾਲ ਵੀਰੋ।
ਕਾਨੂੰ ਗੋਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਘਰੀਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ, ਕਰੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਦਾ ਖਿਆਲ ਵੀਰੋ।
ਚਲੋ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲੋ ਨਾਲ ਆਕੇ, ਸਿਟੋ ਲਾਹ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਦਾ ਜਾਲ ਵੀਰੋ।
ਫੈਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਰਦੇਸ ਦੇ ਧਕਿਆਂ ਦਾ, ਚਾਹੇ ਬੈਠ ਚਿਹੋ ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਵੀਰੋ।

(28 ਮਾਰਚ 1915, ਪੰਨਾ 199)

(Goras don't like blacks, better show what black hands are capable of

Why work for the Gora bosses, let us return to our country

Let's go back as part of the Ghadar party, and dedicate to liberate from serfdom

What have we gained from sojourn abroad except frustrations, even as years have passed abroad?).

8. ਹੁੰਦਾ ਅਜ ਨਾ ਵਤਨ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਸਾਡਾ, ਲੋਕੀਂ ਦੇਖ ਅਸਾਂ ਵਲ ਹਸਦੇ ਨਾਂ
ਤਾਨੇ ਵਜਦੇ ਨਾ ਸਾਰੀ ਖਲਕ ਵਲੋਂ, ਕੁਲੀ ਚੋਰ ਕਾਲਾ ਲੋਕੀ ਦਸਦੇ ਨਾਂ
...ਗੈਰਤ ਅਣਖ ਵਾਲਾ ਜੇਕਰ ਖੁਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਦੇਹਲੀ ਤਖਤ ਜ਼ਾਲਿਮ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਖੱਸਦੇ ਨਾਂ
ਬਿਪਿਨ, ਬੈਨਰ, ਗਾਂਧੀ, ਮਦਨ ਮੋਹਨ ਵਰਗੇ, ਫਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬੂਟ ਝੱਸਦੇ ਨਾਂ

(ਪਰੀਤਮ, 19 ਜੁਲਾਈ 1916)

(Had not our country been slave, how dare people would laugh at us?

They would not have told us off, nor would they call us coolie, thief or black?

Had our blood carried our worthy honour, oppressors could not have dethroned us from Delhi
Bipin, Bannerjee, Gandhi, Madan Mohan and the likes, would not have become lackeys of the
British).

religious preachers that was reprimanded.⁹ The collaborators of the raj; the so-called Khan Bahadurs, Rai Bahadurs etc., 'they are plain monkeys, nay their imitators' as the word *bander* [monkey] was reserved for the British rulers of India.¹⁰

Thus the task of the Ghadar party was onerous one. First it had to propagate its views across the population; divided into diverse social groups of India. Then it has to collect sufficient arms and ammunition for the forthcoming great battle, besides dealing all those bad elements, thieves and collaborators of the *raj*. Then, in a truly poetic giveaway, they had to see the situation as it may develop, the party will have to adjust its strategies according to local conditions.¹¹

9. ਸਾਂਤਮਈ ਨੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨਾਮਰਦ ਕੀਤਾ, ਹਰਕਤ ਖੂਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਈਏ ਰਲਕੇ
ਭੇਡਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਸਹਿਮੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਹੋਏ ਅਗੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਹਕਦੇ ਉਹ ਤੁਰੇ ਜਾਈਏ ਰਲਕੇ।
ਕਾਜ਼ੀ, ਪੰਡਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਨੇ, ਯੁਧ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਵਚਨ ਸੁਨਾਵਣਾ ਨਾ
.... ਸਾਨੂੰ ਲੋੜ ਨਾ ਆਮਿਆਂ ਫਾਮਿਆਂ ਦੀ, ਇਲਮ ਰਗੜ ਫੌੜੇ ਉਤੇ ਲਾਵਣਾ ਨਾ
(Pacifism has turned us impotent, let us put back the lively spirit in our blood
Acting like cowed as sheep, we are led as they want us to
Qajis, Pundits and Gianis would not inspire us to fight
We don't need their false promises, sermons nor such prescriptions for our wounds).
- ਮਰਨਾ ਭਲਾ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੁਖਨ ਇਹ ਮਨ ਭੁਲਾਵਣੇ ਦਾ
ਮੁਲਕ ਜਾਗਿਆ ਚੀਨ ਜੋ ਘੁਕ ਸੁਤਾ, ਢੋਲ ਵਜਿਆ ਹਿੰਦ ਜਗਾਵਣੇ ਦਾ
ਸਾਨੂੰ ਲੋੜ ਨਾ ਪੰਡਤਾਂ ਕਾਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ, ਨਹੀਂ ਸ਼ੌਂਕ ਹੈ ਬੇੜਾ ਭੁਬਾਵਣੇ ਦਾ
ਜਪ ਜਾਪ ਦਾ ਵੇਲਾ ਬਤੀਤ ਹੋਇਆ, ਵੇਲਾ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਤੇਗ ਉਠਾਵਣੇ ਦਾ
ਪੜਕੇ ਗਦਰ ਅਖਬਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਖਬਰ ਲਗੀ, ਵੇਲਾ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਗਦਰ ਮਚਾਵਣੇ ਦਾ (100-101: ਜਨਵਰੀ 1914, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਿੰਘ)
(It is better to die than live a life of serfdom, We should never forget this phrase
China has awakened from its deep slumber, drums of Hindustan's awakening are raging
We do not need Pandits or Qazis, for we do not want our ship to sink
The time for prayers and contemplation is past, it is time to raise the sword
The *Ghadar* paper is proclaiming, time is ripe for revolt).
10. ਮੰਦਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਸੀਤਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਚੰਗੇ ਲੋਕ ਨਕਾਲੇ ਜੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦਵਾਰੇ ਵੇਚਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਭਾਈ ਦਿਲ ਦੇ ਕਾਲੇ ਜੀ।
ਰਾਏ ਬਹਾਦਰ, ਖਾਨ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਵਾਂਗ ਪੂਛਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਜੀ, ਖੁਫੀਆ ਦੇਸ਼ ਘਾਤ ਉਹ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਜੋ ਰਖਵਾਲੇ ਜੀ।
ਇਹਨਾਂ ਪਾਪੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਫਿਕਰ ਕਰੋ ਬਚ ਜਾਵਨ ਦਾ, ਆਉ!... (8 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 149)
(They have oust all the good people from temples and mosques, these black hearts have even sold *gurdwaras*.
They have become Rai Bahadur, Khan Bahadurs –all monkey imitators, pretend our protectors while betraying the country
Save yourself from these sinners somehow, O' lions, take this opportunity to rebel together).
11. ਪੈਹਲਾਂ ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਕਰੇ, ਖੁਲਮ ਖੁਲਾ ਪ੍ਰਜਾ ਤਾਈਂ ਚੋਰਾਂ ਥੀਂ ਹੁਸ਼ਿਆਰ ਕਰੇ।
ਡਾਕੇ ਮਾਰ ਡਾਕੂਆਂ ਉਤੇ ਕਠੇ ਬੀ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਕਰੇ, ਜੈਸਾ ਜੈਸਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਦੇਖੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਕਾਰ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਕਰੇ,
ਸੁਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਜਾ ਜਾਗ ਪਈ ਜਦ ਅਗੇ ਕੰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਦਾ, ਆਉ!... (8 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 149-150)
(First, let the Ghadar party distribute propaganda, ask the public to be ready and caution the thieves
Loot the plunderers and arm itself fully, then as the situation develops, so it should adopt a strategy
As the public awakens, there will be plenty of work ahead, O' Lions, take this opportunity to rebel together).
ਬੇਤਿਕਾਫੀ ਰਖੀ ਜੇਕਰ ਹਿੰਦ ਅਜਾਦ ਨਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਜੇ। ਵਕਤ ਸੁਨੈਹਰੀ ਗਿਯਾ ਹਾਥ ਸੇ ਫੇਰ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਨੇ ਰੋਣਾ ਜੇ।
.... ਸਿਰ ਚੜਾਇਆ ਜਾਲਮ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਉਂ ਧਰਤ ਨਾਲ ਪਟਕਾ ਦੇਈਏ। ਉਨੋਂ ਸੇਰੇ ਵਕਤ ਬੀਤਦਾ ਹਿੰਦ ਅਜਾਦ ਕਰਾ ਦੇਈਏ।
(ਗਦਰ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ, ਸਤੰਬਰ 1915, ਪੰਨਾ 216-217)
(If we remain disunited, don't expect freedom of Hindustan, moreover time slipped never returns back
Why allow oppressor to rule us? Let us get kick him to the ground. Arise, time is passing fast, vow for freedom of Hindustan).

There is thus an underlying theme of heroic duty for the coming struggle for the liberation of India from colonial rule. And the call is for a violent overthrow of the British rule in India.

One should pause to consider this overwhelming emphasis on violent means. What was the source of their inspiration for such a strategy? There are sufficient reasons to think that as Sikhs, it was their understanding of the Sikh history of violent struggle against Mughal and Afghan rulers in the eighteenth century which became the basis for this advocacy. It impels us to explore the antecedents of the Ghadar poetry to understand the persistent theme running through much of this poetry – a call for martyrdom and sacrifices for the coming struggle.

Tracing the Antecedents of the Ghadar Poetry

The lineage of Punjabi literature, like many other linguistic literary traditions owes its origins in religious poetry. The compositions by Sheikh Farid are taken to constitute the first distinctive genre of Punjabi literary tradition.¹² Subsequent history of the Punjabi literature is the large corpus of Sikh sacred writings starting with the ingenuity of Guru Nanak whose verses form the foundation of the *Guru Granth* the sacred Sikh scriptures. The theological temperaments of Nanak's poetical compositions are reflective meditations upon the man's separation from God. Although predominantly concerned with the spiritual motifs, such religious poetry is suffused with words, vocabulary and rhythms that call upon readers to pursue the righteous path. The call for devotion to God enjoins an acceptance of divinely order, but also an active pursuit of the faith – a qualified submission in which at one extreme calls for laying one's life for the cause.

Notwithstanding many commentaries upon the Sikh scriptures, its poetic form is meant for singing, thus its immediate impact is to bring harmony and contemplation to its listeners. As Punjabi literary historians point out, however, there is a clear break in this contemplative poetry with Guru Gobind Singh's writings. The last Sikh Guru was a great writer himself as also patron of poets who commissioned many poetic compositions. Several of these writings deal explicitly towards what may be called 'war poetry.' In some compositions, he purposely re-cast classic Hindu epics enacting the drama of the fighting between the evil and godly forces. In narrating and reinterpreting some ancient Hindu tales, such as goddess Durga's fight with the evil, such compositions recreate the theatre of war and narrate how the forces of the evil are ultimately thwarted. A classic poem, *Chandi di Vaar* is justly celebrated composition in the *Dasam Granth*, it vividly recreates the battlefield of two adversaries fighting it out with arms and ammunition displaying phenomenal gallantry. This is a poetry that inspires the reader for heroic action. By invoking incipient praise for heroes taking to the battlefield, image after image is meant to provide the glimpse of the profound drama of the ferocious evil against the godly sometimes fledging but finally victorious forces. Praise is as much due to the heroic actions of the either side –

12. Sant Singh Sekhon, *A History of Punjabi Literature*, Patiala : Punjabi University, 1995.

in between the author lays emphasis upon worshipping the weapons and celebrates brave actions and the repeated use of rhetorical invocative vocabulary creates new synonyms and words for arms and combat. The *Chandi di Vaar*, thus, has become a classic piece of action celebrating battle per se, or indeed a call for violent action—at times just for the sake of it. It is not surprising that this poem became part of recitation by Sikh rebels against the Afghans and Mughal rulers in the eighteenth century and is still part of prescriptive recitation for the millenarian sect of the Kukas among the Sikhs.

In a way, there seems a direct link of the Ghadar poetry with the early eighteenth century Sikh heroic tradition and its literature. However, the time lag between *Chandi di Vaar* and Ghadar poetry—nearly 200 years has meant the context of the latter is obviously different and employs different linguistic style. While the former prepared its readers for general bravery—strengthening readers' spirit with martial qualities, the latter had a close focus on waging an actual war with an identified enemy. The evil was now fully known in the shape of the British rulers in India. While Durga as a goddess was imagined by the Guru to enact the drama of the righteous fighting in the world, the Ghadar poems invoke the Sikh tradition as a whole to protect the honour of Bharat—the latter is depicted in female form, a vulnerable mother calling for help from its sons.

This is second and another surprising element in Ghadar poetry we need to analyse carefully; a concerted effort to project India—personified as a vulnerable woman, a mother figure who is calling her sons to liberate her whom the clutches of an imperialist tyranny. She is being torn apart, looted and is in agony. She is being ravaged by evil force, exploited and crying out for help. Anyone familiar with the historical evolution of the Sikh community in the Indian subcontinent would note a considerable disjunction by this new imagining on the part of the Sikh poets. What was Sikhs' conception of India in the early twentieth century? Born and bred in the plains of Punjab, the province that had only a tenuous connection with the rest of India, suddenly these Sikhs became jealous protectors of a large entity called Hindustan, Hind or Bharat—they used several names for the larger land, an indication itself of the evolving identity of India's ambiguous geography and demography? This transformation calls for a serious introspection; namely how did they transcend their regional loyalty to the province of Punjab in favour of a larger entity of Hind? This issue calls for a short detour of socio-historical considerations affecting the evolution of the Sikh community in the subcontinent.

The Ghadarite Conception of India: A New Sikh Imagining ?

By the time Ghadar prose and poetry was being composed in San Francisco by Sikh workers in the newly acquired headquarters renamed as Yugantar Ashram, the community of Sikhs had gone through several episodic transformations. Starting as a reformed sect among Punjabi Hindus, the new Sikh faith had become established among Punjab's peasantry who adopting the new faith with enthusiasm. This religious transformation assumed political suzerainty campaign eventually laying

claim to the Punjab region as the realm of the Sikh kingdom. The process started with Banda Bahadur, an emissary of Guru Gobind Singh who fought with the Mughals to establish semi-autonomous power in the central Punjab. The Sikh bands so formed suffered several setbacks, including two major massacres, known as Ghallugharas, but by the close of eighteenth century, these militant bands of Dal Khalsa, emerged victorious under the titular leadership of Ranjit Singh who installed himself as a Sikh king in the Lahore Fort in 1799. Further more, during forty years of his rule Ranjit Singh, stamped a distinctive impress of Punjabi nationalism upon province' population of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims and almost succeeded in moulding large population's loyalty towards the Punjab province. Certainly, the state's armies dominated by Sikh commanders' while composed of Muslims and Hindus developed a high spirit of Punjabi patriotism as was witnessed through two Anglo-Sikhs wars of 1846-1849. With the annexation of Punjab, an experimental incipient Punjabi nationalism was brought to an end as the Punjab province was merged into the British Indian Empire.

For Punjabi population, the colonial era meant a new beginning of belonging beyond the Punjab province. The physical integration with the coming of railway line to Lahore, telegraphic facilities and gradual incorporation of Punjab with the rest of India opened opportunities in the wider world beyond the geography of Punjab. While a gradual linking of Punjab with other provinces through railways and telegraphs meant a new consciousness of being part of India, the empire also offered Punjabis, especially the Sikhs to see the world at large.

As a large number of Sikhs were recruited to serve abroad in the aftermath of Indian mutiny of 1857, Sikh soldiers who were taken abroad came to see India and the British Empire through new eyes. Encouraged by their British officers, many thought of themselves as equal partners in the making of the Empire, or at least having the right to settle in any part of the Empire. This was more or less an impression they could maintain in the Far Eastern countries. But as they started emigrating to West Coast of America, this imagined partnership was punctured. They had to face the reality of being treated as second class citizens or indeed much worse as the British promise for protection in these distant lands proved time and again an empty gesture. This was especially brought home with the forced return of the Komagata Maru with hundreds of Punjabi passengers on board from Vancouver to Calcutta in July 1914. Thus, began the great disillusionment with the British Empire and Sikhs' resentment found expressions in virulent anti-British sentiments of the Ghadar prose and poems.

The poems and prose of the Ghadar make it clear how poets' emphasis was to steer the community in a different direction than was prevalent in their recent past. The preoccupations of the community were somewhat ambiguously centred upon Punjab; their idea of India at the time even more vague. As a community with special claim on the Punjab, the Sikh elite in Punjab were concerned to be recognised as a separate community of an India while sharing its ancient Hindu civilization and this had led to a considerable controversy in the early twentieth

century of Punjab.¹³ Still, it was quite a long route for rural Sikhs who were aware of their distinct religious tradition, language and cultural mores from other Indians, but they also considerable attachment to sub-regional identities based upon Doaba, Majha and Malwa besides caste preferences. How did they shed their own parochial inclinations or loyalties? How they came to subdue their sub-regional identity—that of being Malwais, Doabaais, or Majhails as there is strong evidence of such belongings in major locations of the Sikhs across Malaya, Singapore and other countries.¹⁴

To cut a long story of this transformation, it seems a swift process was underway due to stressful political and social conditions of diasporan living. They had lived through a decade long period of painful migration and settlement the West Coast States they were witness to a long struggle against harsh immigration rules as also rampant racial hostility by fellow Euro-American White workers. They had resorted to appeals and petitions to the British government to provide assistance to them as they pressed repeatedly by referring themselves as loyal Sikh soldiers as also Indians in order to make their appeal widely shared. Their frustrations seeking favour as Sikhs can be seen through various petitions and resolutions presented to Canadian and British Indian authorities. Three years earlier, in a highly publicised case, in 1911, a Sikh delegation went from Vancouver to present to Mr Rogers, Canadian federal minister of Immigration a memorandum saying:

With the name Sikh is linked up fidelity and heroic loyalty to the Empire. We [cite] the Indian mutiny, Africa, Afghanistan, Burma, Somaliland; in other words whenever the Empire needed in the past or may in the future need loyal hearts to protect or preserve her honour. The Sikh has always been ready in the past to give willing service to the Empire.¹⁵

Rejected in this endeavour, it made sense to cooperate with people of other regions of India, the Bengalis and Punjabi Hindus who were among them and shared their problems and issues. Thus, their sense of humiliation meant opening themselves to a wider struggle—stressing a larger community of Hindustanis. It was the British Empire which defined a new Hindustani nationality and geographical identity—all people of Indian subcontinent were under one ruler—and they were being treated badly, indeed in one angry version of it, ‘as slaves.’ Thus, being Sikhs might have been a different connotation and understanding of the British Empire at another place or time, in the West Coast of America, they shared the

13. J.S. Grewal, ‘An Argument for Sikh Nationality : Nabha’s Hum Hindu Nahin’, in *Four Centuries of Sikh Tradition*, Delhi : OUP, 2011.

14. Tatla, Darshan S. ‘Imagining Punjab : Narratives of Nationhood and Homeland among the Sikh Diaspora’, in *Sikh Religion, Culture and Ethnicity*, edited by C. Shackle, Gurharpal and Arvindpal Singh Mandair, London : Curzon, 2001, pp. 161-185.

15. Parambir Singh Gill, ‘Pious Rebels : The Ghadar Prose and Practice’, in *The Ghadar Movement: Background, Ideology, Action and Legacies*, ed. J.S. Grewal, Harish Puri and Indu Banga, Patiala : Punjabi University. 2013, pp. 275-300.

same sense of humiliation as other people of India. The new face of the British rule in a sense demanded to forsake their religious identity in favour a larger Hindustani *qaumic* identity. They had seen how emphasis upon the Sikh *qaum* to seek concessions from the British rulers was becoming progressively meaningless. It was time to look beyond Punjab –especially towards Bengal and then to forge alliance with other regions and their peoples. This included surprisingly all of Muslims and Pathans –with whom the community had a long history and memory of attrition and hostilities.

In this exploratory process of realignment, they had recourse to the Sikh scriptures which emphasised the common roots of humanity. In the circumstances they were in, they also had the benefit of cooperation offered by small number of men from other provinces, the Bengalis and Hindus and even Muslims amidst them. Through such an interaction with these other Indians, who were better educated than them, they had learnt much. They also had some knowledge of similar situation of other Indian peoples in South Africa and in other British colonies and dominions. These new companions stretched Sikhs' attachment of Punjab towards an imagining of an all India vision. The place of such interaction was of course rather special; its diasporic setting with much interaction among the peoples of different regions of Hindustan, though Sikhs enjoyed a predominant majority among them. So, the time was right to represent themselves as part of Hindustanis. And some of non-Sikhs seemed sufficiently sincere in such cooperative ventures –although the experience was mixed –as some of these educated ones were found rather 'clever.' Other Indians Sikh met were generally of a better class, educated and refined who stressed the need for wider representation as 'Indians.' Moreover, in Har Dayal, a Punjabi Hindu, he came down as a more acceptable face, someone who impressed Americans, and who like them [and unlike many educated Hindus], did not hark back on a past glorious Hindu civilisation –his was a practical 'all India vision'. Sikhs were discovering commonalities and new reality of their West Coast experiences pushed them into this direction –especially the episode of Komagata Maru was a glaring lesson and confirmation of their re-thinking.

However, even as Sikhs learnt to direct their vision to a larger entity of India, they were aware of the underlying problem of diversity of India, the disunity among its people. And they had to address this issue head on. It was again a new beginning for Punjab centred Sikhs as several poems illustrate;¹⁶

16. ਸੋਹਨਾਂ ਮੁਲਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦਾ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਇਕ ਖਿਆਲ ਵੀਰੋ।
ਕਮਰ ਕਸਕੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਏ, ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਗਿਆ ਮੁਲਕ ਬੰਗਾਲ ਵੀਰੋ।
ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਨ ਕਠੇ, ਜਲਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਪਠਾਨ ਬੀ ਨਾਲ ਵੀਰੋ।
ਪੰਨਵਾਦ ਕਰੀਏ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੂਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ, ਹੋਏਆ ਕੌਮ ਖਾਤਰ ਇੰਨਤਕਾਲ ਵੀਰੋ।

(28 ਮਾਰਚ 1915, ਪੰਨਾ 199).

(The beautiful land of the Punjab belongs to us, Punjabis, it alerts me to a grand idea
As we started to organise it was Bengal who cooperated with us
Then Muslims, Hindus and Singhs came together, joined by Pathans too
And we all need to be grateful to those who have already sacrificed their lives for the nation).

(Contd...)

The above discussion points towards a new consciousness among West Coast Sikhs and as such this was a new departure in their collective identification with India. Coupled with their aim of organising a diasporic challenge to the mighty British Empire, the Ghadar poetry and prose can be best read as a Sikh manifesto—a proposition which is further elaborated below.

Reading Ghadar Poetry as a Sikh Manifesto

Thus, by the time the *Ghadar* weekly made its first appearance, West Coast Sikhs had undergone a vast symbiosis of collective identification—and had decided upon strategy to deal with their woes. In a sense, the first issue of the *Ghadar* newspaper was a declaration of a Sikh manifesto, a declaration against the past heritage of service to the Empire. As one reads through the somewhat rustic expressions of the *Ghadar di Goonj* and prose of the *Ghadar* paper, with its direct appeal to wage a war against the British rulers. As this intention was announced, this new resolution also required a re-alliance and re-assessing of the Sikh heritage of the distant past too. Two distinct patterns of this rhetoric manifest in this literature. The first concerned the role of Sikhs during the 1857 mutiny and the second was to reorient the Sikh gurus' mission towards contemporary India.

The mutiny of 1857 was translated into Punjabi as 'Ghadar' and the name of the weekly newspaper was of course derived from this event. A major strand of Ghadar prose and poetry called upon Sikhs to lament their role in the 1857 uprising—passage after passage ask them to imagine what would have happened had they whole-heartedly supported the revolt. The mutiny was to be the new source of inspiration for India's independence—its history of a united front of somewhat disparate elements of Hindus and Muslims was to be emphasised. As is well-known Sikhs generally were adverse or indeed joined forces with the British in re-establishing imperial authority in Lucknow and Delhi. The aim of rebels to restore the Mughal king Bahadur Shah was something highly offensive to the Sikhs of the Punjab. The campaign had of course resulted in far reaching implications for the Sikhs and the Punjab province in the future of British India. As a direct result of this mutiny, the Sikhs became favourite recruits for the newly organised regimental order as the armed forces of the raj were given a

(Contd. from last Page)

ਖੁਫੀਆ ਰਾਜ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀਆਂ ਕਰੋ ਕਾਇਮ, ਰਲੁ ਮਰਾਠੇ ਬੰਗਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਯਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਓ
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਿਖ ਤੇ ਮੋਮਨੋ ਕਰੋ ਜਲਦੀ, ਇਕ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦੇ ਮਦਦਗਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਓ

(Form secret societies, cooperate with Marathas, Bengalis, be friends with them

O' Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, sooner the better, show unity, offer cooperation to each other).

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਸਿਖ ਵਾ ਬੰਗਾਲ ਸਾਰੇ। ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਪੁਤ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਹੀ ਕਹਾਂਵਦੇ।

ਸ਼ਰਾ ਤੇ ਮਜਹਬ ਜੇਹੜੇ ਰਖ ਲੋ ਕਿਨਾਰਿਆਂ ਤੇ। ਦੇਖੀ ਜਾਊ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਪੈਹਲਾਂ ਕਤਲਾਮ ਦਾ।

.... ਸੁਰਮੇ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਸਾਰਾ ਗਾਂਵਦਾ ਜਹਾਨ, ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਆਲੀ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਜੀ।

ਉਠੋ ਹਿੰਦ ਵੀਰੋ ਵੇਲਾ ਆਗਿਆ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀਆਂ ਦਾ। ਜਾਨ ਦੇਕੇ ਰਖੋ ਤਾਂ ਭੀ ਸਸਤਾ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਜੀ।

(Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims and Bengalis et al, we are all sons of Hindustan

Let us keep religion and doctrinaires aside, we will deal them later, first is the task of war)

The world recalls celebrates the brave, like Sham Singh Atari's legendary sword

Arise O' Hindustanis, time has come to offer sacrifices, still it is cheap if we protect Hindustan by our lives).

wholesale reshuffle and the Punjab province became the strong arm of India's defence for the next 70 years. As a number of these poets were former soldiers or had close connections with them, they also knew how Sikhs constitute a significant proportion of police and army regiments serving in several colonies of the Empire. Taking all these factors into account, these poets faced quite a task of re-situating themselves – from a position of former collaborators to declared enemies of the raj.

Ghadar poets sought Sikhs to lament their role in the 1857 mutiny and how they had betrayed the country then. The problematic relation of Punjab to India in the nineteenth century was glossed over as was the Sikhs' relationship with the Mughal authorities. What was emphasised was to understand their duty towards India which was to re-establish their true credentials as patriots of India.

The second and in fact even wider call was given for re-thinking of the aim of the Sikh Panth. These poetical expressions emphasised the aims of Sikhs in a radical new direction – by redefining the aim of the Guru to defend India and liberate it from the foreign yoke. For this, a long poem sets the scene for re-interpreting and realigning the Sikh past towards India and look beyond the region of Punjab. Titled as 'A Plea to the Panth', where they are asked to pause and think, 'ਜਰਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਇਥੇ ਸੋਚਣਾ ਜੇ। ਵਾਕ ਗੁਰਾ ਦੇ ਕਰੋ ਖਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ' it sets the tone for many subsequent poetic expressions;¹⁷

17. ਪੰਥ ਅਗੇ ਪੁਕਾਰ: ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮੁਖਵਾਕ – ਸੁਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀਏ
ਪਰ ਉਪਕਾਰ ਕਾਰਨ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਸੀ, ਹਥੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਜੰਗ ਕਮਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਭਾਰਤ ਵਰਸ ਤੋਂ ਜੁਲਮ ਹਟਾਇਆ ਸੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਜੰਗੋਂ ਜੁਦਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਏਸ ਹਿੰਦ ਦੀ ਰਖਿਆ ਖਾਤਰ ਵਾਰ ਦਿਤੇ ਸੀ ਜਿਗਰ ਦੇ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਜਿੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਮਜਾ ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਚਖਿਆ ਸੀ, ਦਸ ਗਏ ਸੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਚਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।

(ਜਨਵਰੀ 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 94-97)

(The Guru established the Panth for selfless service, He fought a marvellous battle
To remove tyranny from India, battles on many fronts
And for the protection of this Hind, he sacrificed his dear sons
Who fought like warriors and set the pace of a true Singh).

.....
ਪਿਛੋਂ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਨੇ ਜੋਰ ਪਾਇਆ, ਕੀਤਾ ਆਕੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੰਦਾ ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਰਗੇ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਸੂਰੇ ਨੇਕ ਦਿਲ ਅਜਾਦ ਖਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸੀ ਵਡ ਸੂਰਾ, ਨਿਤ ਰਖਦਾ ਓਟ ਅਕਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਮਾਰੇ ਪਾਪੀਆਂ ਕਰ ਡਕਾਰ ਵੀਰੋ ਬੋਲੇ ਮੁਖੋਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਅਕਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਜਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਸਧਾਰ ਗਏ, ਅਸੀਂ ਭੁਲ ਗਏ ਆਪਣੀ ਚਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਰਾਹ ਛੱਡਕੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੁਰਾਹ ਪੈ ਗਏ ਤਾਹੀਂ ਹੋਏ ਹਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਨਿਵਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਜਦੋਂ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਲੀਪ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਿਆ ਮੁਲਕ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਭੁਚਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਕੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਵਲੈਤ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਹੋਇਆ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਮੰਦਤਾ ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।
ਵਿਚ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਆਣ ਦਫੇਤ ਪੈ ਗਈ ਫਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਦੇ ਜਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੇ।

(Then Ranjit Singh waged battle and pressed on the rebels
Likes of Hari Singh Nalwa, a noble warrior and pride and liberation
Akali Phool Singh emerged a giant, a god-fearing warrior, he was
Who killed the oppressors and remembers the god.
As these illustrious warriors passed away, we seem to have lost our way
Remember as Duleep Singh was arrested, a quake hit the country.
He was bound for England, and the Panth degenerated into bad times
Lo, the Panth was split in the middle, slavery was thus inevitable).

(Contd...)

Then, in another poem there is a further plea to the Sikhs asking them to revive their old tradition of valour and sacrifices—but this time such sacrifices are for a different cause. While in the past, Anglo-Sikh wars were fought for maintaining the sovereignty of Punjab, now the challenge is for the whole of India—in several poems Indian is called the mother. In these poems, the past of the Sikh heritage is re-interpreted to establish its linkage to India, and community's eighteenth century struggle for survival and fighting against Afghans and Mughals authorities of the Punjab province are re-cast. Now those events and episodes from Sikh history are told as narratives whereby Sikhs were defending India as a whole against foreign marauders.

In particular the life and times of last guru Gobind Singh—who spent a large part of his life in defending himself and his followers against the Mughal rulers and their collaborators, some Shivalik Hindu kingdoms and was eventually forced eviction Anandpur is given an entirely new twist; that the tenth Guru came to the world with an aim to end the oppression, and the Sikhs as his followers need to revive that spirit. Moreover the name of the baptised Sikh as a Singh is invoked many times and he is called upon to fight for the country of India. A number of legendry martyrs of the Sikh history are recalled in the service of India—their past sacrifices, readers are told, were for Hindustan;¹⁸ Repeatedly poems remind readers

(Contd. from the last page)

ਜੱਟਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਦੋਸ਼ ਨਾਹੀ, ਸਾਡੇ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੰਦਾ ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ
ਰਾਏ ਬਾਂਦਰਾਂ ਮੁਲਕ ਵੀਰਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਰਖਦੇ ਬਾਂਦਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ

(ਜਨਵਰੀ 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 94-97)

(Peasants as simple folks are not to be blamed, it is leaders who betrayed them
Monkeys (Feringhis) have exploited the country, we Singhs have cultivated those monkeys).

ਅਸੀਂ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਦਾਵੇਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਭੈੜੀ ਗਿਦੜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਡੀ ਚਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਧਰੀਕ ਦੀ ਲਾਜ ਰਖੋ, ਭਾਰਤ ਵਰਸ ਤੇ ਖੇਡੋ ਗੁਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਜੇਹੜਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ, ਗੋਰੇ ਬਾਂਦਰਾਂ ਲਿਆ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਜੀਠੀਆ ਨਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ। ਭੈੜੀ ਚਲਿਆ ਚਾਲ ਚੰਡਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਹਰਮੰਦਰ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਸੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਲੀਡਰ ਹੈ ਉਸਦੇ ਦਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਗੁਰ ਦਵਾਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਮਾਣ ਕਰਦੇ। ਵਾਹੀ ਦਿਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਦੀਵਾਰ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਅਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁਬੇਗ ਸੁਬਾਜ ਹੁੰਦੇ। ਦਿੰਦੇ ਚਰਖੜੀ ਚਾਹੜ ਦਿਖਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਜੇਕਰ ਅਜ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੂਰਾ। ਹਥ ਪਕੜਦਾ ਤੇਗ ਤੇ ਵਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ।

(We are Singhs in name only, our performance is like those of cowards, wily jackals
Match your name with the deserved deeds, think of your country, Hindustan
We established Khalsa College, lo, it has been taken over by Feringhi—the monkeys
Betrayed by Sundar Singh Majithia, who has played a vile play
Harmandir was established by the gurus, look our leaders have traded it too
You take pride in gurdwaras, the government has demolished the wall in Delhi
Had the likes of Subeg Singh been around, they would have punished the culprits duly
And if Dip Singh was alive today, he would have taken his sword in hand again)

18. ਕਬਿਤ: ਸਿੰਘ ਜਰਾ ਅਖਾਂ ਖੋਲ ਕੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਨਾ

ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਰਖ ਕਿਉਂ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਛਟ ਚੁਕੀ ਗਿਦੜਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਕਿਉਂ ਲੁਕੋਂਦੇ ਫਿਰੋਂ ਜਾਨ ਨੂੰ।
ਆਓ ਜੰਗ ਦੇ ਮਦਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡੋ ਸਿੰਘੀ ਨਾਮ ਐਵੇਂ ਲਾਜ ਕਿਉਂ ਗੋਂਦੇ ਹੋ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨੂੰ।
ਸੂਰਜ ਦੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਨਾਮ ਰੋਸਨ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੌਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਣੇ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਮਦਾਨ ਨੂੰ।
ਵਾਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਅਖਾਂ ਮੀਟ ਬੈਠੇ ਭੁਲ ਗਏ ਸਿੰਘ ਯਾਰੋ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਨੂੰ।
ਜੁਲਮ ਮਟੋਨ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਯੁਧ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਕੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਸੀਸ ਦਾਨ ਨੂੰ।
ਛੋਟੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਲਾਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਰ ਦਿਤੇ ਬੋਝੇ ਉਤੇ, ਬੋਝੇ ਸਾਥ ਪਿਆਰ, ਪਿਆਰੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਾ ਸੰਨਤਾਨ ਨੂੰ।

(Contd...)

of the heroic Sikh tradition of sacrifices and through it the duty of Sikhs to liberate India from the British rule. The old Sikh martyrs and heroes are named alongside new Indian personalities.¹⁹

A Radical Call to Sikh Soldiers

Allied to this theme of re-interpretation of the Sikh past, there is more urgent task

(Contd. from the last page)

ਪੜ੍ਹੋ, ਕਾਰਨਾਮੇ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੈਸੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਦਏ, ਭੁਲਗੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਫੁਰਮਾਨ ਨੂੰ।

ਆਓ ਜੰਗ ਦੇ ਮਦਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੋੜੋ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਨਾਮ, ਤੁਸਾਂ ਪੀਨਾਂ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਨਾਹੀ ਇਸ ਗਦਰ ਭਰੇ ਜਾਮ ਨੂੰ।

(21 ਅਗਸਤ 1915, ਪੰਨਾ 211)

(Call yourself Singh and living under slavery, like wily jackals, hiding and saving your lives? Come, venture into the battle front, as Singhs, why bring shame to the proud name of Gobind Singh?)

Guru's name shines through, we the cowards have brought disrepute to that name?

Just citing the wonderful, the wonderful guru, have not we actually forgotten the political know-how?

He had vowed to destroy injustice and tyranny, and gave his own life for the cause!

In the cause, young sons he sacrificed, have you forgotten Guru's command?

Read again his indictments, the glorious deeds, and the commands of our great Guru

And come to the battlefield, let us dedicate life and drink the nectar of *Ghadar*—the rebellion!

ਏਸ ਹਿੰਦ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸੀ ਲਖਾਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਹੋਏ। ਅੱਜ ਅਸੀਂ ਬੈਠ ਗਏ ਬਸਾਰ ਕੇ ਜੋ ਏਸ ਨੂੰ

ਗੁਰੂ ਦਸਮੇਸ਼ ਗਿਯਾ ਟੱਬਰ ਸਮੇਤ ਵੀਰੋ, ਨਬੀ ਗੰਨੀ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਚੱਲ ਸਕੇ ਨ ਕਲੇਸ ਨੂੰ

ਮਤੀ ਦਾਸ ਸੂਰਮੇ ਬਰਾਣਾ ਧੜ ਆਰੇ ਨਾਲ, ਖੋਪਰੀ ਲਹਾਈ ਤਾਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੱਖ ਕੇਸ ਨੂੰ

ਅਸੀਂ ਕਾਇਰ ਜਮ ਪਏ ਲਗਯਾ ਦਾਗ ਜੋਧਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ, ਭਾਰਤ ਜਨਮ ਲਾਜ ਲਾਈ ਕੁਲ ਦੇਸ ਨੂੰ।

(For this Hind, millions sacrificed their lives, it is we who have forgotten the cause

The Tenth Guru sacrificed his whole family, Along with Nabbi and Ganni Shah for the cause

Remember Mati Das's body was sawn into two, And the head of Taru Singh was split

It is we cowards born, blacking the deeds of those martyrs, And brought disgrace to the whole of Bharat!).

ਪੰਜ ਕਰੋ ਰਖ ਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਣਦਾ। ਗਿਦੜ ਕਹਾਵੇ ਗੀਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਰਣ ਦਾ।

ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਲੜੇ ਗੱਜ ਕੇ। ਬਣੀ ਸਿਰ ਸ਼ੇਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੀ ਜਾਣਾ ਭੱਜ ਕੇ

ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ ਕਹਾਉਣਾ ਸੀਸ ਧਰੇ ਹੱਥ ਜੀ। ਪੈਹਨ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਖੜੇ ਹੋਵੇ ਸੱਥ ਜੀ।

(ਗਦਰ, 17 ਫਰਵਰੀ 1914)

(Not by 5Ks, you become a Singh; if you run away from the battle you are called jackals

Singh is one who fights his ground; lions are those who never turn back!

Call yourself Singh, place heads on hands, arm yourself and commit in public).

19. ਸਾਕੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੇ ਯਾਦ ਜੋ ਕਰ, ਖੂਨ ਮਾਰਦੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਉਛਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਲੂਏ ਤਾਂਈਂ ਜਗ ਜਾਣੇ, ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰ ਗਏ ਜਗ ਮਸਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਅਟਾਰੀ ਵਾਲੇ, ਬੁਢੀ ਉਮਰ ਲਖਾਂ ਘਾਲੇ ਘਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਤੀਕ ਰਹਸੀ ਨਾਮ ਜਗ ਉਤੇ, ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਜਾਨਦੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਹਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਸੁਤੇ ਪਏ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਸ਼ ਆਵੇ, ਲੈਂਦੇ ਚੋਬੜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਉਠਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਅਗੇ ਹੋਕੇ ਕਦਮ ਰਖੋ, ਸਾਡੇ ਵੀਰ ਮੁਸਲਮ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਏਸੇ ਤਰਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ ਦਿਤਾ, ਦਗੋਬਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਚਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਜੇਹੜੇ ਗੀਤ ਗੋਂਦੇ ਵਫ਼ਾਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ, ਬੇਈਮਾਨ ਓਹ ਤੁਖਮ ਚੰਡਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

(164-65p, a distressed passenger of the Komagata Maru).

(Remembering episodes of Guru Gobind Singh, why does not our blood curdle?

Example set by Hari Singh Nalwa is known by the whole world

Sacrifice of Sham Singh Atariwale, who in old age showed such exceptional chivalry

Till the humanity survives, won't the names of such heroes shine?

Let the slumbering Punjab arise, and get going

Step forward and our Muslim brothers will join us

Don't you understand how Punjab was enslaved by the wily deceitful?

Those who sing praise of the tyrants, aren't they dishonest and cowards?)

—a call to Sikh soldiers who are serving in the armies. They are enjoined not to fight for the imperial rule—their new duty is indeed to revolt. There are numerous passages which call upon Sikh soldiers to become allies of anti-British forces. Indeed, well aware of Sikh soldiers' predominance among British Indian armies, this was one of obvious strategies adopted by Ghadar leaders after their return to Punjab. Some the Ghadarites themselves had direct experience of soldiers' life as they had served the empire prior to their settlement in North America. Many had friends, relatives and other close contacts with ranks that were stationed in Malay, Shanghai, Hong Kong and other strategic locations.²⁰

20. ਚਲੋ ਹੁਣ ਚਲੀਏ ਸ਼ਤਾਬੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ। ਫੌਜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਕੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ।
ਗੋਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਖਾਣਾ ਪਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਜੀ। ਧਾਰ ਲੈ ਇਰਾਦਾ ਝੰਡਾ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਤ ਜੀ
ਉਠਿਆ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜਦੋਂ ਬਲ ਧਾਰ ਕੇ। ਗੋਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਛਡੂਗ਼। ਤੁਖਮ ਚਾਤ ਕੇ।

(ਗਦਰ 7 ਅਪਰੈਲ, 1914)

(Let us then return to beautiful land, and preach to the soldiers
We will challenge the Goras, and firm resolution to unfurl the flag
As the Punjab will arise with strength, it will push Goras into the ground).

ਕਾਹਨੂੰ ਗਾਲਦੇ ਹੋ ਉਮਰ ਭੰਗ ਭਾਤੇ, ਫੌਜਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਓ ਖੂਨ ਬਹਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ।
ਸਤ ਸਤ ਰੁਪਏ ਤੇ ਵੇਚਦੇ ਹੋ, ਹੀਰੋ ਜੇਹੀ ਬੇਕੀਮਤੀ ਜਾਨ ਵਾਲੇ।
ਉਠੋ ਗਾਜੀਓ ਬਾਜੀਆ ਜੰਗ ਖੁਲੋ, ਓਏ ਮੁਹੰਮਦੀ ਦੀਨ ਈਮਾਨ ਵਾਲੇ।

(Why waste life into a useless cause, O' soldiers, you let your blood for them
You sell life cheap for seven rupees each; your life is more precious like jewels
Arise O' brave ones, fight for liberation, O' Muslims, for the righteous cause !).

ਵੇਲਾ ਬੀਤਦਾ ਜਾਂਵਦਾ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਬਬਰੋ, ਛੇਤੀ ਕਰੋ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀਆਂ ਪਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ।

ਕਰਕੇ ਜੰਗ ਫਰੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਤੰਗ ਕਰੀਏ, ਛੇਤੀ ਕਰੋ ਚਾਲਾਕ ਕਹਾਨ ਵਾਲੇ॥ (ਸਤੰਬਰ 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 148).

(Time is lapsing, O' Lions, join soon for martyrdom
Fight against imperial rulers, the wily clever ones, do hurry up).
ਖਬਰਦਾਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਗਲ ਨਾ ਮੁਖ ਕਮਲਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਸੂਰਜ ਨਜਰ ਆਇਆ ਯੂਰਪ ਜੰਗ ਵਾਲਾ, ਚਿਤ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਘਬਰਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਜਰਮਨ ਨਾਲ ਫਰੰਗ ਦਾ ਜੰਗ ਲਗਾ, ਸੋਹਣਾ ਵਕਤ ਨਾ ਕਿਤੇ ਵਹਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਅਜ ਕੁਤੀਕੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ, ਮਤਾਂ ਚਾਲ ਬੀਂ ਜਾਨ ਬਚਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

(Careful, be careful O' Hindustanis! Don't feel sad after hearing this predicament

The battlefield in Europe is on the horizon, let it not worry you

Between German and Britain war has erupted, an ideal opportunity has arisen

The enemy is caught in terrible fix; make sure it does not escape unscathed).

ਚੀਨੇ ਭਾਈ ਹਨ ਵੀਰਨੋ ਐਸ਼ਿਆ ਦੇ, ਭਾਈਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਾ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਫਸਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਸਗੋਂ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਕਰਨੀ ਮਦਤ ਚੀਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ, ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਤਾਂ ਦਬਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਹਿੰਦ ਚੀਨ ਟਰਕੀ ਸਕੇ ਹੈਨ ਭਾਈ, ਵੈਰੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਾਗ ਨਾ ਲਾ ਜਾਵੇ। (ਦੁਖੀਆ ਸਿੰਘ, 2 ਅਗਸਤ 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 146)

(Remember Chinese are brothers; let not the enemy tell you otherwise

Instead you should support the Chinese, let the enemy not suppress them

Hindustan, Turkey, China are like real brothers, allow not the enemy to defeat them !).

ਜਾਲਮ ਚਾਰ ਚੁਫੇਰੇ ਘੇਰਿਆ ਹੈ, ਦਿਸੇ ਰਾਹ ਨਾਹੀਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ।

ਟਰਕੀ ਅਰਬ ਫਾਰਸ ਕਾਬਲ ਮਿਸ੍ਰ ਪੰਜੇ, ਫੌਜ ਤਯਾਰ ਬਰ ਤਯਾਰ ਅਫਾਨ ਵਾਲੀ।

ਸਿੰਘ ਚੀਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਜੇ ਕਰ ਕਰਨ ਹਿੰਮਤ, ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਮਲਾਣਾ ਸਬਾਨ ਵਾਲੀ।

ਸਿੰਘਪੁਰ ਅੰਦਰ ਆਲਾ ਤੋਪਖਾਨਾ, ਕਾਫੀ ਫੌਜ ਹੈ ਯੁਧ ਮਚਾਨ ਵਾਲੀ।

ਗੋਰੇ ਲੂਣ ਸਮਝੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ, ਉਠੀ ਫੌਜ ਜਦੋਂ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਵਾਲੀ।

ਜੇ ਕਰ ਅਜੇ ਵੀ ਵਕਤ ਸੰਭਾਲਿਓ ਨਾ, ਮਿਟੀ ਖੁਆਰ ਹੋਸੀ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਵਾਲੀ। (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਿੰਘ, 25 ਅਗਸਤ 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 147).

The enemy is surrounded from all sides, with no escape route left

Turkey, Arab, Fars, Egypt, Kabul all five, have all their armed forces ready

If Singhs in China join now, and so too those in Hong Kong and Malaya

There is canon depot in Singapore; we have enough forces to wage a decisive war

British forces are as thin as salt in the flour, let all Hindustani forces combine

Lose the opportunity this time around; Hindustan will take long time to recover.

As the above selections show, Ghadar activists were well aware of the war situation and predominant role of soldiers recruited from Punjab in the Indian armies. They also wanted to take advantage of the kind of multiple difficulties the empire administrators were facing at several war fronts. As the World War I expanded to embrace several more countries the fighting expanded from Europe to Middle East involving Turkey, Mesopotamia and Afghanistan. Punjabi soldiers were being despatched to newly opened theatres in 1914-15 coinciding with the arrival of Ghadar activists in India. There was grave situation in the Far East because of Japan's ambivalent position, and some hold of Germany in Batavia and Dutch East Indies. Moreover, there were large Sikh communities settled across the Far East who could potentially create difficulties for the British administration. The loyalty of Punjabi soldiers was of crucial importance to the Indian authorities. The Punjab Governor O'Dwyer was acutely aware of stress upon the provincial administration in this regard. One or two regiments which showed seeds of dissent were immediately ordered to be isolated. Similar development in Singapore was taken very seriously—with rebels given exemplary punishments—scores of Muslim soldiers were publicly executed. The Ghadar poetry is full of references to this dangerous mix of opportunity against the British Empire if Punjabi soldiers could be persuaded to throw their lot with rebels.²¹

Then a large corpus of poetical expressions of Ghadar poets calling for a violent movement invites readers to mediate the role of poetry in public life. What does poetry do? There is a long spectrum of views on how poetry affects human sensibility. A view famously turned into a memorable phrase by Auden's poem 'Poetry makes nothing happen.'²² Since then, much debate has been generated

21. ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਬੀੜਾ ਚੁਕਿਆ ਹਿੰਦ ਅਜਾਦ ਕਰਾਵਨ ਦਾ, ਆਉ! ਸ਼ੇਰੋਂ ਗਦਰ ਮਚਾਈਏ, ਮੌਕਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਖੁੰਜਾਵਨ ਦਾ।
ਵੱਜ ਬਬੇਰੀ ਪਾਸ ਅਸਾਡੇ ਬਾਈ ਸਾਡੇ ਬੇੜਿਆਂ ਮੇਂ, ਨਾਮ ਕਟੇ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਰਜਰਵੀਏ ਵਸਦੇ ਨਗਰ ਖੇੜਿਆਂ ਮੇਂ।
ਲੋਕ ਹਿੰਦ ਦੇ ਬੜੇ ਸੁਦਾਈ ਫਸ ਗਏ ਮਜਬੀ ਖੇੜਿਆਂ ਮੇਂ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਝਗੜਨ ਪਏ ਬਖੇੜਿਆਂ ਮੇਂ।
ਟੁਕੜੇ ਤੋਂ ਸਭ ਭੁਖੇ ਮਰਦੇ ਫਿਕਰ ਸੁਵਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਵਨ ਦਾ, ਆਉ! ਸ਼ੇਰੋਂ ਗਦਰ ਮਚਾਈਏ ਮੌਕਾ ਨਹੀਂ ..
(Ghadar party has resolved to liberate Hind, so, let us join together, O' lions—let us not miss the opportunity
Enough of soldiers we possess, our brothers serving across the seas, ex-soldiers too in many towns and villages
But we foolish are distracted by religious strife, involving it in politics, we indulge in unnecessary feuds
Bare of bread even, they worry about the high heavens, O' lions, take this opportunity to rebel).
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਿਖ, ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਸਾਰੇ ਇਕੋ ਕੌਮ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਬਦਮੁਆਜ਼ ਚਾਲਾਕ ਫਰੰਗੀ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਤਾ ਫਾਡੀ ਹੈ।
ਆਪਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਤਫਾਕ ਨਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਵਡੀ ਭੁਲ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਹੈ। ਟਰਕੀ ਚੀਨ ਮਿਸਰ ਤੇ ਕਾਬਲ ਜਰਮਨ ਵੀ ਵਲ ਸਾਡੀ ਹੈ।
ਆਓ! ਕਠੇ ਹੋਕੇ ਲੜੀਏ ਵੇਲਾ ਹੈ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਵਨ ਦਾ। ਆਉ! ਸ਼ੇਰੋਂ ਗਦਰ ਮਚਾਈਏ...(8 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 149-150)
(We are just one nation, all Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims; it is the Feringhis who have frustrated us all
That we have not united is our mistake; remember Turkey, China, Egypt, Kabul and Germany are on our side
Come! Join together to fight, time is right, O' lions, take this opportunity to rebel together).
22. Terry Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 90-91. Auden's famous lines occur in 'In Memory of W. B. Yeats' in *Partisan Review*, 1939 as:
....For poetry makes nothing happen
in the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to temper....

about this phrase's context and more generally about its implications; the meaning, mode and interpretation of poetry as to its social and political utility. There is a distinctive school of thought within critical literary tradition emphasising a poem's primary introspective, contemplative and reflective role for the human mind. At the other end, many critics have made a strong case for poetry as an active ingredient for social awareness, citing particular genres of poetical traditions such as war-related poetic and folklore traditions, among them several classic epics. Without discussing this point further, one can surely bracket the Ghadar poetry as one of the prime example where poetical expressions became vehicles for political mobilisation for the Sikh diasporic community spread across several continents.

Our case to treat the Ghadar literature as a manifesto also finds support as we note how late nineteenth and early twentieth century was highly conducive to the production of such manifestos. Provides an excellent introduction to such manifestos around the world seeking an explanation in terms of an age of idealism when the devastations wrought by world wars and nuclear proliferation were yet to come. The age of scepticism that would plunge the world community into two large warring camps would take some decades to materialise.²³ There is a case of treating the long distance diasporic expressions of the Ghadar poets as a manifesto in this mould.

Conclusion: Reading Ghadar Poetry as a Sikh Manifesto

This paper has argued, these poetical expressions can be treated as a Sikh manifesto, a declaration of an immense goodwill towards a future Indian polity. It was certainly a new episteme -a declaration by small number of Sikhs abroad facing peculiar stressful economic and social conditions. These expressions underline an agonising but romantic outpourings of Sikh diasporan poets, and as such these poems and prose easily lend themselves as samples of their political naivety as some of the 'Indian elite' had dubbed them then and since then often. They certainly adopted a utopian ideal -of liberating India -not stopping to think such a strategy was bound to disappoint in terms of practical implications. Then one has to qualify such a harsh judgement with the fact these emotionally charged poems mobilised hundreds of men on a return path to their homes in 1914, where their political campaign was crushed by colonial authorities with tragic consequences.

Thus, reading Ghadar poetry in its 100th anniversary year is to remind oneself of an ideal Sikh dream. Certainly, that ideal India, free of prejudice and religious bigotry, free of starvation and inequality, an India of harmonious living and respect to all and sundry, an India where diverse linguistic, religious and cultural heritage of its people will find full expressions is yet a distant reality. The Ghadar poetry then remains a document of intent, stirring the youthful readers in particular as was seen through the Naxalite movement of the late 1960s and many militants of

23. Martin Puchner, *Poetry of the Revolution : Marx, Manifestoes and the Avant Gardes*, Princeton University Press, 2005.

the 1984 tragedy. And its legacy lives on as Punjabi literary critics attest to a 'progressive' or leftist Punjabi literature inspired from the Ghadar poetry.

In contemporary Punjabi literary circles, the legacy of the Ghadar party is mainly applauded for its 'patriotic yearnings' for India and foreclosed at that. However as Parmbir Gill has underlined such a reading of the Ghadar literature through modern secularist ideology has failed to analyse its more salient features concerning religion—especially the reformulating of Sikh history in the service of anti-colonial struggle.²⁴ Surely a proper understanding of this literature should take account of Sikhs' diaspoic conditions in the West Coast of North America and its authorial context. Unless we pay serious attention to the diasporan Sikhs' social and religious sensibilities as part of an evolving community of Indians abroad, we will not get beyond lauding such literary expressions as merely imbued with bland 'patriotic fervour.'

The Ghadar literature lends a more meaningful discussion if we treat it as a Sikh manifesto—born of peculiar situation of the West Coast Sikhs and issued as an emotional and urgent appeal for a possible solution. This kind of declaration was a radical departure from the Sikh community's earlier perceptions, its place in India as also in the wider world. Like all manifestos, it is grand on intentions, but highly unrealistic a document to will rather than a scheme to implement. It remains a document of intent. The complex situation of Indian social setting was unfit for such lyrical expressions and in a way avoided harsh reality through recourse to romantic yearnings. A community's past was re-moulded at poets' will and this harking failed miserably as was shown in the subsequent developments both during the colonial era as also in the post colonial Punjab.

But impregnating the sincerity of their dire determination when the task was almost impossible for any rational mind to contemplate is a lasting legacy of the Ghadar movement as a whole. As a vulnerable visible minority in many countries across the world, the Sikh diaspora continues to face issues and problems drawing parallels with the North American Ghadarite experiences this includes not only racial discrimination and other forms of prejudice but also a less than sympathetic attitude of the Indian state especially in the aftermath of the 1984 tragedy in Punjab. As the outpourings of a community whose members had seen much humiliation and insults showered upon them, these expressions continue to imprint upon the contemporary Sikhs and Punjabi readers generally giving them pause for thought to belong to an Indian nation.

Moreover, in so calling for the liberation of India from the Imperial rule and the establishment of a composite Indian polity, the Sikh authors of this prose and poetry did not recite or write mere Punjabi letters but suffused this rhetoric with their blood. No proclamation was issued in such deadly earnest as this Sikh manifesto from San Francisco.

24. Parmbir Singh Gill, *Pious Rebels : The Ghadar Prose and Practice*, pp. 278-79.

THE GHADR MOVEMENT AND ITS LITERATURE: UTILISING THE 'PAST'

Navtej Singh*

'History has utility for humanity in two different ways. One, that societies can learn lessons from the past-experiences of their ancestors and thereby through its understanding can immensely benefit in shaping the future course of historical developments. Two, in order to achieve particular objectives the individuals and groups can use 'history' for socio-political mobilisations. This technique to utilize 'history' to animate popular opinion is the subject of this paper. It tends to focus on how was it that the much debatable event of 1857 or precisely the 'Revolt of 1857' attracted attention of the Ghadr Party: its image, perception and utilisation alongwith nature of this efficacy form scope of this evaluation.

It is well-known that in May 1913 Sohan Singh Bhakna and his associates formed an organization called 'Hindi Association' in the United States of America. With the entry of Hardyal, its name was changed to 'Hindi Association of Pacific Coast.' It aimed at bringing about a revolution in India in order to secure liberation from British control.¹ On 1 November 1913 the Party started a weekly newspaper called *Ghadr* and with popularity of the paper, the party came to be known as the 'Ghadr Party'. However, in April 1914 *Ghadr* became *Hindustan Ghadr*.

The extent to which the paper derived its name from 1857 becomes clear from the newspaper itself. On the first page of *Ghadr / Hindustan Ghadr* it was regularly mentioned that '57 years have been passed to the Revolt of 1857, there is need to have second revolt now. 'Literally *Ghadr* means mutiny or revolt and is indicative of the object of Ghadr Party of an armed struggle like the one of 1857.² For the Party 1857 was an equivalent of 'revolution' in which kings, army and peasantry fought together for India's freedom. It was a milestone to bring fundamental changes in the consciousness and politics of Indians. The event stressed the need for army for future revolutions and it was because of this that the event became an inspiration for 'Ghadr Party' and it adopted it as a model of strategy.³ Ultimately Party changed its name to 'Ghadr Party' in 1928.⁴

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1. *The Ghadr Directory*, 1934, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997 (Reprint), p. i.
2. Kesar Singh Novelist (ed.), *Ghadr Lehar Di Kavita*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1995, p. 27.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Analysed literature of the 'Ghadr Party' is available in the *Ghadr, Hindustan Ghadr, Ghadr Di Gunj, Babbar Gunj, Ghadri te Kama, Desh Bhagton Di Bani, Sudesh Sewak, Sansar and Yugantar*, etc.⁵ For the sake of convenience only poetical literature published in the Ghadr Party publications have been focussed upon. It is also clear that most of this poetry is in Panjabi Language written by Panjabis, especially the Sikhs.⁶ It has also been noted that this poetry had been addressed to Indians, especially the Panjabis or the Sikhs, or more precisely to the members and sympathisers of the Party.

The earliest reference available to the revolt of 1857 pertains to the rejection of role played by Princely States of Nabha and Patiala with whose help the British had conquered Punjab and accordingly their performance have been dubbed as a very bad action not expected even from the 'Chandals',⁷ Panth in general remained inactive during 1857 but Nabha ruler showed loyalty to the British and in turn lost some parts of his territory. It is stressed that if they had sided with the revolt, freedom would have achieved much earlier.⁸ Further the common people of these princely states were not to be blamed but the bankrupt leadership including Rai Bahadurs, Khan Bahadurs and Sardar Bahadurs.⁹

The Ghadr writing laments the passing of fifty seven years to the revolt but at the same time very optimistic of the second revolt in the year 1914 for which it gives call to Indians for sacrifice.¹⁰ Heroes of 1857, especially Luxmi Bai, Rani of Jhansi becomes symbol of challenge, while Lala Har Dyal have been equated with her under whose leadership the Party had given call for revolt.¹¹ For them the popular perception about failure of the revolt of 1857 was the role of Sikhs playing into hands of the British without no reasons.¹² During the revolt, to throw out the British, many Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims had joined hands with the active participation of leadership like Nana Sahib, Ali Nakki Khan, Luxmi Bai, Maulvi Shah Ahmed, Tantia Tope, Mangal Pandey alongwith many youngmen of eastern

5. Ibid., pp. 1-21.

6. Ibid., pp. 26-33.

7. ਏਥੇ ਆਉਣ ਦੀ ਏਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਜ਼ਾਲ ਕੀ ਸੀ। ਜੇ ਨਾ ਲਿਆਂਦੇ ਨਾਭਾ ਪਟਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

ਮਦਦ ਏਨਾ ਦੀ ਫਤਹ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਕੀਤਾ। ਜੇਹੜੇ ਬਣੇ ਨਾ ਨਿਮਕ ਹਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

ਏਨਾ ਕਰਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਵੀਰੋ ਬਹੁਤ ਭੈੜਾ। ਐਸਾ ਕਰੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਚੰਡਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

(ਪੰਥ ਅੱਗੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼, ਜਨਵਰੀ 1914, ਕੇਸਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਉਹੀ ਪੰਨਾ 95)

8. ਜਦੋਂ ਸਨ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਵਿਚ ਗਦਰ ਹੋਯਾ। ਆਇਆ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਜਵਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

ਨਾਭਾ ਪਤੀ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਵਡਾਦਾਰੀ। ਸਗੋਂ ਖੁਸ਼ ਗਿਆ ਪੱਥੇਵਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

ਅੱਜ ਮੁਲਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਖੇਡਣਾ ਸੀ। ਕਰਦੇ ਪਿਯਾਰ ਜੇ ਗਦਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

(ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 95)

9. ਜੱਟਾਂ ਸਿਧਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਦੋਸ਼ ਨਾਹੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੰਦਾ ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

ਰਾਏ ਬਾਂਦਰਾਂ ਮੁਲਕ ਵੇਰਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪਿਯਾਰ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਬਾਂਦਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

(ਉਹੀ)

10. ਪੋਹਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਜੋ ਗਦਰ ਹੋਇਆ। ਜਿਹਨੂੰ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਸਤਵੰਜਵਾਂ ਸਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

ਦੂਜਾ ਗਦਰ ਜੋ ਫੇਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਹੋਇਆ। ਵਿਚ ਆਣ ਸਤਵੰਜਵਾਂ ਸਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

ਏਸ 'ਗਦਰ' ਨੂੰ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਫਰਜ਼ ਸਾਡਾ। ਭਾਰਤ ਵਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਨੌਂ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

11. ਬਾਈ ਲਖਛਮੀ ਵਾਂਗ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਗੱਜੇ। ਦਸੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਸਬ ਕੁਮਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

"ਹਰਦਿਆਲ" ਹੋਇਆ ਹਰ ਦਿਯਾਲ ਜਿਥੇ। ਭਾਰਤ ਵਰਸ਼ ਦਾ ਨੌਂ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

ਛੇਤੀ ਗਦਰ ਮਚੇਣ ਦੀ ਕਰੋ ਤਿਆਰੀ। ਫਤੇਹ ਦੇਵਸੀ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਸਿੰਘੋ॥

(ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 97)

12. ਲੋਕ ਆਖਦੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਹ ਬੜੇ ਭੈੜੇ, ਗਦਰ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਮੌਜ਼ ਕਾਹਨੂੰ।

ਹੁਣ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਲਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਮੇਂ ਖੇਲਣਾ ਸੀ, ਏਹਨਾ ਘੱਤਿਆ ਸੀ ਐਡਾ ਲੋਹੜ ਕਾਹਨੂੰ।

(ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪੜ੍ਹੋ, ਲੇਖਕ 108, ਜਨਵਰੀ 1914, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 102)

India who fought bravely. But the traitors defeated the achievement of freedom.¹³ Sawarkar was jailed for writing history of the revolt.¹⁴

The writing expects the workers to organise underground committees, exactly like the previous revolt and also made clear to them to be ready for sacrifice to achieve freedom.¹⁵ Because Nana Sahib and Tantia Tope are known for their sacrifices and Maulvi Shah Ahmed as a brave commander of the rebel army. But the British with the help of traitors had surrounded the Rani of Jhansi. There is mention of dialogue between British and Rani that the British asked her to have secure passage by her willingness to leave Jhansi. However Luxmi Bai rejected their offer and challenged the British to fight. There is description of her fight and performance in the battle with sword in her hand. She killed many of the enemies at the cost of her own life. This detail of Rani's bravery is meant to generate inspiration that if a woman could fight with such ferocity why not Ghadr Party.¹⁶ The day of 10 May

13. ਜੁਲਮ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਜੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੱਟਣੇ ਨੂੰ, ਕਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
ਪਹਲੇ ਗਦਰ ਅੰਦਰ, ਜਿੰਨਾ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ, ਨਾਨਾ ਸੋਹਬ ਅਲੀ ਨਕੀ ਖਾਨ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
ਰਾਣੀ ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਮੌਲਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਐਹਮਦ, ਤੋਪੀ ਤਾਂਤੀਆ ਬੀਰ ਬਲਵਾਨ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
ਲੜਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਦੇ ਮੰਗਲ ਪਾਂਡੇ, ਨਾਲ ਪੂਰਬੀ ਕਈ ਜਵਾਨ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
ਦੇਸ਼ ਘਾਤੀਆਂ ਕੰਮ ਬਗ਼ਾੜ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਈ ਪੂਰਬ ਬੇਈਮਾਨ ਹੋ ਗਏ।
(ਬੈਂਤ: ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਦਾ ਜੁਲਮ ਮਿਟਾਨ ਖਾਤਰ, ਲੇਖਕ ਇਕ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਿੰਘ, 14 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 1914, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 119)
14. ਸੱਠ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਜੇਲ ਸੁਵਾਰਕਾਰ ਜੀ, ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਗਦਰ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਰਵਾਨ ਹੋ ਗਏ। (ਬੈਂਤ: ਉਪਰੋਕਤ, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 120)
15. ਖੁਫੀਆ ਤੌਰ ਕਮੇਟੀਆਂ ਕਰੋ ਕਾਇਮ, ਪਿਛਲੇ ਗਦਰ ਦਾ ਕਰੋ ਧਿਆਨ ਵੀਰੋ।
ਖਾਤਰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਪਉ ਮਰਨਾ, ਪੱਕੀ ਬਾਤ ਏਹੋ ਲਵੇ ਜਾਣ ਵੀਰੋ।
(ਬੈਂਤ: ਇਕ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਦੀ ਕਸਮ, ਲੇਖਕ ਇਕ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਿੰਘ, 21 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 1914.)
16. ਨਾਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਤਾਂਤੀਆ ਤੋਪ ਵਰਗੇ, ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਤੇ ਜਾਨ ਨਾਸਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਬੜਾ ਸੂਰਮਾ ਮੌਲਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਐਹਮਦ, ਸ਼ੇਰ ਫੌਜ ਦਾ ਸਿਪਾ ਸਾਲਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਜੇਹਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਦੇ ਗਦਰ ਕੀਤਾ, ਪੁਤਰ ਹਿੰਦ ਦੇ ਉਹ ਆਖਣ ਦਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਰਲਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਟਰੇਟਰਾਂ ਬੇਈਮਾਨਾਂ, ਲਈ ਘੋਰ ਝਾਂਸੀ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਰਾਣੀ ਛੱਡ ਝਾਂਸੀ ਭਲਾ ਲੋੜਨੀ ਜੇ, ਰੁੱਕਾ ਲਿਖੇ ਫਰੰਗ ਬਦਕਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਜਾਨ ਜਾਉ ਭਾੜੇ ਭੰਗ ਤੇਰੀ, ਲਈ ਘੋਰ ਰਲ ਕੇ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਰੁੱਕਾ ਲਿਖੇ ਫਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਵਲ ਰਾਣੀ, ਜਿਗਰੋਂ ਖੂਨ ਆਯਾ ਜੋਸ਼ ਮਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਬੇਈਮਾਨ ਫਰੰਗ ਬੇਕਦਰ ਪਾਂਬਰ, ਸੋਹਣਾ ਲਿਖੇ ਅਲਕਾਬ ਉਚਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
'ਝਾਂਸੀ ਛੱਡ' ਲਿਖਿਆ ਲਫਜ਼ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਂ, ਲੱਗੀ ਸਾਂਗ ਸੀਨੇ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਦੇਖਣ ਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਅੱਖੀਆਂ ਲਾਲ ਹੋਈਆਂ, ਚੇਹਰਾ ਭਖੇ ਜਿਉਂ ਭਖੇ ਅੰਗਿਆਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਮਝਦੀ ਸਾਂ ਅੱਜ ਦੇਖ ਲੀਤਾ, ਏਹ ਫਰੰਗ ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਦਗੋਦਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਝਾਂਸੀ ਛੱਡਸਾਂ ਨਾ ਜਿੱਚਰ ਜਾਨ ਮੇਰੀ, ਲਿਖੇ ਲਖਸ਼ਮੀ ਬਾਈ ਲਲਕਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਜਿੱਚਰ ਤੀਕ ਨਾ ਤਨੇ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਛੁੱਟਣ, ਝਾਂਸੀ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਮਿਲਣੀ ਦੁਸ਼ਵਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਜਦੋਂ ਬਦਲਦੀ ਫੇਸ ਬਹਾਦਰਾਂ ਦਾ, ਸੋਹਣੇ ਸਜਦੇ ਬਦਨ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਘੋੜਾ ਫਿਰੇ ਕੁਦਾਉਂਦੀ ਜੰਗ ਅੰਦਰ, ਲਿਸ਼ਕ ਮਾਰਦੀ ਹੱਥ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਦੇਵਾਂ ਜਾਣ ਝਾਂਸੀ। ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਨ ਝਾਂਸੀ, ਲਿਖਾ ਜਾਣ ਝਾਂਸੀ ਗਲ ਦਾ ਹਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਨ ਝਾਂਸੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਣ ਝਾਂਸੀ, ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਝਾਂਸੀ ਡਾਢਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਭਾਵੇਂ ਜਾਨ ਜਾਵੇ ਝਾਂਸੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਵੇ, ਝਾਂਸੀ ਮਿਲੂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪਹਲੇ ਮਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਮੈਥੋਂ ਜਿਉਂਦੀ ਕਰੋ ਅਲਗ ਝਾਂਸੀ, ਕੇਹਦਾ ਕਦਰ ਦੁਨੀਯਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਕੇਹੜਾ ਜੰਮਿਆ ਏ ਝਾਂਸੀ ਲੈਣ ਵਾਲਾ, ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਹੋਸਲਾ ਲਵੇ ਨਤਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਸਿਰਫ ਧਮਕੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਾ ਮਿਲੂ ਝਾਂਸੀ, ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਮਿਲੂ ਨਾਲ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਦੇਹਾਂ ਪਾਸਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਦਲ ਆਨ ਝੁਕੇ, ਖੂਬ ਜੰਗ ਹੋਯਾ ਘਲੂ ਘਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਮਾਰ ਮਾਰ ਫਰੰਗ ਦੇ ਘਾਣ ਲਾਹੇ, ਦਿੱਤੀ ਲੋਭ ਤੇ ਲੋਭ ਉਸਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਹੱਥ ਪਕੜ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਆਈ, ਬੋਲੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਤਾਈਂ ਵੰਗਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਆਓ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਦੇਖੋ, ਨਾਲੇ ਕਰੋ ਰੋਕੋ ਮੇਰਾ ਵਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਜੀਉਂਦੀ ਜਾਨ ਨਾ ਪਿਛਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੂੰਹ ਕੀਤਾ, ਓਹ ਸਪੁੱਤਰੀ ਹਿੰਦ ਦੁਲਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਹਾਰ ਥੱਕ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋਈ, ਪਿਆਰੀ ਗਈ ਸੁਵਰਗ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
ਮਰਦਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਦੁਲਾਰੀ ਨੇ ਹੱਥ ਕੀਤੇ, ਓਹ ਸਪੁੱਤਰੀ ਲਖਸ਼ਮੀ ਨਾਰ ਭੀ ਸੀ।
(ਗਦਰ ਦੀ ਬੈਂਤ [ਗਦਰ 57 ਦੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ], ਲੇਖਕ ਦੁਖੀਯਾ ਸਿੰਘ, 10 ਮਈ 1914, ਪੰਨੇ 123-25)

becomes unforgettable; rather a day celebrating India's first war of independence by not only remembering the day rather knowing the fact that disunity was the root cause of defeat or failure and that this lesson was not to forget.¹⁷

Further the atrocities by the British on Indians led to the revolt but the Native States could not see through this state of affairs and had sided with the 'Money' British. It helped the British to commit more atrocities.¹⁸ The revolt was equally meant to awaken people but people were not willing to rise even in 1914.¹⁹ Yet the entire world is critical of the role of Sikhs which resulted in destruction of India. Had they not sided with them, the country would have been in freedom. It was a blot on Sikhs and to remove it they must rise now in 1914 and if they remember Guru Gobind Singh's sacrifice.²⁰

The event had become unforgettable and so were the leaders like Luxmi Bai, Maulvi Shah Ahmed, Nana Sahib, Tantia Tope, Ali Nakki Khan and Mangal Pande. Equally unforgettable are the traitors who sided with the British in stopping imminent success.²¹ Commenting upon lack of general awareness of Indians it is stressed that the Ghadr Party had carried forward the light of previous Ghadr but people had forgotten the event.²² For the Party 1857 revolt was a concerted effort and it was compulsory to remember and have inspiration in order to raise the second revolt. And there was requirement and need to have such commanders like Tantia Tope

17. ਦਿਲਾਂ ਦਰਦੀਆਂ ਦਰਦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਭਾਵੇਂ, ਦਸ ਮਈ ਦਾ ਦਿਨ ਭੁਲਾਵਨਾ ਕੀ।
ਏਸੇ ਰੋਜ਼ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦਾ ਜੰਗ ਛਿੜਿਆ, ਵਕਤ ਖੁਛੀ ਦਾ ਗਮੀ ਲਿਆਵਣਾ ਕੀ।
ਆਪਸ ਵਿਚ ਲੜਕੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਹਾਰ ਆਈ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸਬਕ ਹੁਣ ਮਨੇ ਭੁਲਾਵਨਾ ਕੀ।
(10 ਮਈ, 1857 ਦੇ ਗਦਰ ਦੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ, ਜੂਨ 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 128)
18. ਜੁਲਮ ਦੇਖ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਪਾਈ ਮਰਦਾਂ, ਕਰੀਏ ਗਦਰ ਏਹ ਨੇਕ ਸਲਾਹਿ ਦਿੱਤੀ।
ਅਠਾਰਾਂ ਸੌ ਸਤਬੰਸ਼ਮੇਂ ਸਾਲ ਅੰਦਰ, ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਹੁਮ ਮਚਾਇ ਦਿੱਤੀ।
ਮਾਰੀ ਮਤ ਗਈ ਦੇਸੀ ਰਿਆਸਤਾਂ ਦੀ, ਬਾਂਦਰ ਗੋਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਂਦਰ ਜਾਇ ਦਿੱਤੀ।
ਨਦੀ ਬਗਦੀ ਜੁਲਮ ਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਠਾਰੀ, ਕਿਸਤੀ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਬਿਚ ਰੁੜਾਇ ਦਿੱਤੀ।
ਭਾਰਤ ਬਰਸ ਮਸ਼ੂਮ ਕਰਲਾਵਣੇ ਨੂੰ, ਕਾਤੀ ਹੱਥ ਫਰੇਗ ਵਜਾਇ ਦਿੱਤੀ।
(ਬੈਂਤ: ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਦੁਲਾਰਿਓ ਸੁਨੋ ਭਾਈ, ਨਵੰਬਰ 1914, ਪੰਨਾ 169)
19. ਇਕ ਭੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਗਲ ਮੰਨੀ, ਬਾਰ-ਬਾਰ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਮੈਂ।
ਏਸੇ ਲਈ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਦਾ ਗਦਰ ਕੀਤਾ, ਸ਼ੇਰੇ ਸੁਤਿਓ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਜਗਾਇਆ ਮੈਂ।
(ਭਾਰਤ ਮਾਤਾ ਦੀ ਪੁਕਾਰ, ਪੈਂਤੀਸ ਅਖਰੀ, ਇਕ ਟਾਪੂ ਤੋਂ ਦੁਖੀਆ ਸਿੰਘ, ਦਸੰਬਰ 27, 1914-ਜਨਵਰੀ 3, 1915, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 177)
20. ਸਾਰਾ ਜਗ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਮੇਹਣੇ ਮਾਰਦਾ ਏ, ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹਿੰਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਬਰਬਾਦ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਜੇਕਰ ਗਦਰ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਦਾ ਰੋਕਦੇ ਨਾ, ਭਾਰਤ ਵਰਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਅੱਜ ਸ਼ਾਦ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
ਉਨੋਂ ਜਲਦ ਕਲਕੀ ਦਾ ਦਾਗ ਧੋਈਏ, ਦਸਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਜੇ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਯਾਦ ਸਿੰਘੋ।
(ਮੇਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਰਥਨਾ, 24 ਜਨਵਰੀ, 1915, ਪੰਨਾ 186)
21. ਦਸ ਮਈ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਵਿਚ ਗਦਰ ਕੀਤਾ, ਦਿਨ ਆਜ ਓਏ ਸੂਰਮੇਓ ਭੁਲਨਾ ਨੀ।
ਜਿਨਾਂ ਸੂਰਮਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਬੀੜਾ ਚੁੱਕਿਆ ਸੀ, ਆਗੇ ਯਾਦ ਓਏ ਸੂਰਮੇਓ ਭੁਲਨਾ ਨੀ।
ਜਿਨਾਂ ਗਦਰ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੱਧੀ, ਮੁਣਿਆਦ ਓਏ ਸੂਰਮੇਓ ਭੁਲਨਾ ਨੀ।
ਰਾਣੀ ਲਖਸ਼ਮੀ ਮੌਲਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਹਿਮਦ, ਨਾਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਓਏ ਸੂਰਮੇਓ ਭੁਲਨਾ ਨੀ।
ਤੋਪ ਤਾਂਡੀਆ ਤੇ ਖਾਨ ਅਲੀ ਨਕੀ, ਹੋਏ ਸ਼ਾਦ ਓਏ ਸੂਰਮੇਓ ਭੁਲਨਾ ਨੀ।
ਮੰਗਲ ਪਾਂਡੇ ਸੀ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਦਾਨ ਲੜਿਆ, ਦਿਲ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਓਏ ਸੂਰਮੇਓ ਭੁਲਨਾ ਨੀ।
ਖੱਲਾਂ ਖੁਰਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੋਰੇ ਢੂੰਡਦੇ ਸੀ, ਚੱਲੇ ਭਾਜ ਓਏ ਸੂਰਮੇਓ ਭੁਲਨਾ ਨੀ।
ਜਿਨਾਂ ਪਾਜੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਗਦਰ ਰੋਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਦਰੋਬਾਜ਼ ਓਏ ਸੂਰਮੇਓ ਭੁਲਨਾ ਨੀ।
(ਦਸ ਮਈ ਦੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਂਤ, 10 ਮਈ 1916, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 250)
22. ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਦਰ ਕੀ ਜੋਤ ਕੋ ਦੀਆ ਜਗਾ, ਤੁਝੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਗਦਰ ਕੀ ਖਬਰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ।
(ਗਦਰੀ ਭਜਨ, ਬਾਗੀ, ਜੂਨ 1916, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 254)

and Rani Jhansi or were desirable such personalities to guide the second revolt. The opportunity had arrived after a very long time.²³ The *Ghadr* newspaper after the name of revolt of May 10, who had sacrificed themselves, called upon his countrymen that the time to revolt had arrived.²⁴ The atrocities committed by the British, after suppressing the revolt have been mentioned specifically, in the form of inciting Indians against each other, killing of people with cannons, murder of individuals by arresting them for their participation, and by the grant of jobs and *Jagirs* to those toadies who helped the British in capturing the rebels.²⁵

Lamentation at the failure of the first revolt and in the face of atrocities being committed by the British, memories of rebellious heroes like Nana Sahib, Tantia Tope, Luxmi Bai, Maulvi, Baba Ram Singh of Kuka Movement and Ali Nakki Khan were the only ray of hope left for inspiration. For the recent and second revolt a recall of their bravery was essential.²⁶ For the Party the greatest contribution of 1857 was the survival of consciousness of being Indian and the present day rebellion had the same underlying spirit of 1857.²⁷ Unfortunately the

23. ਬੰਦੋਬਸਤ ਸਾਰਾ ਗਦਰੀ ਨੀਕ ਕਰਕੇ, ਪੈਹਲੇ ਗਦਰ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਮਨਾ ਲਈਏ।
ਤਾਂਤੀਆ ਤੋਪੀ ਤੇ ਲਛਮੀ ਬਾਈ ਜੇਸੇ, ਕਈ ਵੱਜੀ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਬਣਾ ਲਈਏ।
ਜੇਭੇ ਦਸਣ ਨੀਤੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਗਦਰ ਵਾਲੀ, ਉਨਾਂ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਗੇ ਲਾ ਲਈਏ।
ਬੋਹੁਤ ਚਿਰਾਂ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਗਦਰੀ ਵਕਤ ਮਿਲਿਆ, ਗਦਰੀ ਵਕਤ ਦੀ ਕਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਪਾ ਲਈਏ।
ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਵਤਨ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਵੀਰੋ, ਜਿੰਦਾ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਮੇ ਨਾਮ ਲਖਾ ਲਈਏ।
(ਬੋਤ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਰਸ਼ ਦੇ, 13 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1916, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 264)
24. ਦਸ ਮਈ ਅਖਬਾਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਾਲੇ, ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਉਤੇ ਸੀਸ ਲਾ ਗਏ ਹਨ।
ਕਰੇ ਗਦਰ ਜਲਦੀ ਕਰੇ ਗਦਰ ਜਲਦੀ, ਦੋਹੇ ਆਖਰੀ ਬਚਨ ਸੁਣਾ ਗਏ ਹਨ।
(ਬੋਤ : ਛੱਡੋ ਨੀਂਦ ਭੇੜੀ, 20 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1916 ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 265)
25. ਪਾੜ ਪਾੜ ਕੇ ਖਾ ਲਿਆ ਮੁਲਕ ਸਾਰਾ, ਮਾਦਰ ਹਿੰਦ ਦੀ ਕੁਲ ਸੰਤਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਫੇਰ ਗਦਰ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਨੇ ਪਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਾ, ਜਦੋਂ ਲਗੇ ਸੀ ਜੁਲਮ ਦੇ ਬਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਰਾਨੀ ਲਖਸ਼ਮੀ ਤੇ ਨਾਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇਵੇ, ਵਿਚ ਗਦਰ ਦੇ ਹਥ ਦਖਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਹਿੰਦੀ ਹਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੜਾਇ ਕੇਤੇ, ਫੜੇ ਗਦਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਖਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਭਾਹਡੇ ਜੁਲਮ ਕੀਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਦਰ ਪਿਛੋਂ, ਸੂਰੇ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਉੜਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਜੁਲਮ ਤੇ ਆਇਕੇ ਲਕ ਬੱਧਾ, ਚੁਗ ਚੁਗ ਕੇ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਦੇਨ ਨੌਕਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਭਾਰੀ, ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੇਹਕੇ ਫੜਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਸਗੇ ਭਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਈ ਦੇ ਮਗਰ ਲਾਇਆ, ਦੇ ਦੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਵਤਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਬਹਕਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਰਾਜਨੀਤ ਦੀ ਨੀਤ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਜਾਨੀ, ਵੇਰੀ ਅਕਲ ਦੇ ਜੋ ਬੁਧੀਵਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਮਾਰੋ ਹੋ ਅਕਨੇ ਬਦਜ਼ਾਤ ਤਾਈਂ, ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਿੱਖ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
ਪਿਛਲੇ ਗਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੋ ਦੇਰੀ ਹੋਈ, ਨਵਾਂ ਗਦਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਲਵਾਨ ਲੋਕੋ।
(ਬੋਤ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵਕਤ ਸੀ, ਲੇਖਕ : ਦੁਖੀ, ਦਸੰਬਰ 1916, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨੇ 276-78)
26. ਯਾਦ ਆਵਣ ਦਿਨੇ ਰਾਤ ਹਰਦਮ, ਨਾਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਤਾਂਤੀਆ ਬੀਰ ਸਾਡੇ।
ਪਿਆਰੀ ਲਖਸ਼ਮੀ, ਮੱਲਵੀ, ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ, ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਗਹੀਰ ਸਾਡੇ।
ਅਲੀ ਨੌਕੀ ਜੇਸੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤ ਸਾਰੇ, ਲੱਖਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਫਿਰ ਮਾਰੇ ਮਨੀਰ ਸਾਡੇ।
ਵਕਤ ਸਾਡਾ ਜਾਇਆ ਮੁਲ ਨਾ ਕਰ, ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਬੋਰੀਆ ਬਿਸਤਰਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਜਾ।
ਗਦਰ ਸਨ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਦਾ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਕੇ, ਲੇਖੇ ਦੇਣ ਖਾਤਰ ਖਬਰਦਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾ।
(ਯਾਦ ਵਤਨ (ਪੋਤੀ ਅੱਖਰੀ), ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ, ਫਰਵਰੀ-ਮਾਰਚ 1917, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨੇ 277-78)
27. ਬੀਰੋ ਸਨ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਦੇ ਗਦਰ ਕਰਕੇ, ਅੱਜ ਹਿੰਦ ਦੇ ਖੜੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਮੰਗਲ ਪਾਂਡੇ ਨੇ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਜਾਲਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਦਰ ਮਚਾ ਬਲਵਾਨ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਬੀਰ ਸਨ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਦੇ ਗਦਰ ਅੰਦਰ, ਲੜੀ ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਤੋਪ ਤਾਂਤੀਆ ਨਾਲ ਸੀ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਹਿਮਦ, ਬਾਲਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਰਗੇ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਆਇਆ ਖਿੱਚ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਵੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਰਪਤ, ਲੱਖਾਂ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਬੇਜਾਨ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਦੇਗ ਤੋਗ ਤੇ ਬੋਲ ਦੇ ਧਨੀ ਪੂਰੇ, ਨਾਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਅਲੀ ਨੌਕੀ ਖਾਨ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਨਹੀਂ ਭੁੱਲਣਾ ਗਦਰੀਆਂ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ, ਕਰਕੇ ਯਾਦ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਦੇ ਤਾਣ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਨਹੀਂ ਜੋਤ ਹੋਈ ਮਧਮ ਗਦਰ ਵਾਲੀ, ਪਿਆ ਮੁਲਕ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਘਮਸਾਨ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਲਿਖੀ ਗਦਰ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਸਾਵਰਕਰ ਜੀ, ਜੇਹਲ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅੰਡੇਮਾਨ ਦੇਖੋ।
(ਹਿੰਦ ਦੇ ਸੂਰਬੀਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ, ਜੂਨ 1917, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 306)

mutual rivalries played havoc on revolt.²⁸ Yet the *bigle* of freedom was started in 1857 and for breaking the shackles of slavery the leadership went to the extent of their own sacrifices.²⁹

Thus the image of 1857 to the Ghadr Party was one of Major inspirational role model among other previous historical events. To the extent that it began to publish its newspaper in the same name and popularity acquired by the Paper later on becomes name of the Party. Familiarity of the role played by princely states of Nabha and Patiala in providing assistance to the British to recapture Delhi becomes act of very low level and emerging blot on the Sikhs. But for their support India would have achieved freedom much earlier. But their understanding makes distinction between the rulers and common people of these states who had to follow their rulers. Secondly, to the Ghadr Party perception of heroes of 1857 who attracted their repeated mention included Rani Luxmi Bai, Tantia Tope, Ali Nakki Khan, Maulvi Shah Ahmed and Mangal Pandey. However Luxmi Bai becomes centre of attraction being woman with bravery. They equate the event with first war of independence and for them the popular perception of its failure was the position of the Sikhs. The day of May 10 becomes a symbol of challenge to be emulated in future anti-British uprisings. Contrarily they are also aware of that the disunity of Indians was the root cause of its failure. But the revolt erupted because of atrocities of the British against Indians and failure of revolt led to more atrocities. However, heroes and traitors become equally unforgettable and also that the metaphor of challenge to British Imperialism along with the development of consciousness of being Indians survived as the indirect consequences of revolt. Further, perception of the Ghadr Party also made clear the level of historiography on the event. It is evident that they had no knowledge about the evolutionary process of historical developments in which the concept of Indian nationalism was not existing at that time. Rather different provinces and states had diverse forms of relationship with the British and hence their response. This forms the major error of historiography of the time and also faulted the understanding of the Ghadr Party. The embedment of this consciousness at popular level was bound to generate bias perception about the Sikhs during this and later on their role in India's freedom struggle.

28. ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਜੋਸ਼ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਿਆ ਤਨ ਨੂੰ, ਕਿਤੇ ਨੇਕ ਰਸਤੇ ਜੋਸ਼ ਲਾ ਲਈਏ।
ਮਤਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਸਤਵੰਜਾ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਜਾਵੇ, ਕੱਚੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਪਕਾ ਲਈਏ।
ਮਤਾਂ ਫੇਰ ਆਪੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਟ ਪਈਏ, ਆਪਸ ਵਿਚ ਪਿਆਰ ਵਧਾ ਲਈਏ।

(ਬੈਂਤ : ਭੁੱਢੇ ਥਾਪ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਦੇ, 1914, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 383)

29. ਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਰਾਜ ਗੁਰੂ, ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਦਾ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਫਾਂਸੀ ਦੇ ਤਖ਼ਤੇ ਤੇ ਆਖਰੀ ਪੈਗਾਮ, ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 423.

THE INFLUENCE OF GHADAR MOVEMENT ON BHAGAT SINGH'S THOUGHT AND ACTION*

*Harish K. Puri***

Bhagat Singh's birth centenary celebrations in 2007 became a reason for a revival of research interest in Bhagat Singh, in his thought and action and in issues related to the history of his time. One also notices a degree of fresh interest in the Ghadar movement among the Punjabis settled abroad and those in the two Punjabs in the wake of the movement's centenary celebrations in 2013. The influence that the Ghadar movement had in the making of Bhagat Singh and his movement has not been closely studied. It was in a deeper sense the question of the attitude the Ghadarites brought to the understanding of the social and political conditions of their times and an "audacity of hope". The political context of the decade after the first world war was vastly different from that of the preceding decade. Bhagat Singh's political ideas and actions reflected a transaction between those of the Ghadarites and the new ones thrown up by the post-war political turmoil in India and by the message of the Russian revolution.

My argument here is that both in his thought and action Bhagat Singh's struggle may be viewed as a continuation of the Ghadar movement. His conscious articulation of rationalism and scientific socialism did not as much constitute a break or a shift as an advancement of that struggle in an altered historical context. The Kirti Ghadrīs were also grappling with their erstwhile cluster of ideas and beliefs. In many of Bhagat Singh's writings available to us, the Ghadar movement was clearly upheld as the first genuinely revolutionary struggle for the freedom of India. Besides the courage of conviction and tremendous sacrifices of the Ghadarites, what amazed him was the manner in which these semi-literate Punjabi workers and farmers in North America had absorbed transformative revolutionary ideas floating in the world in such a short time. Their rejection of orthodoxy, the tendency towards socio-cultural radicalism, and their intense nationalism along with a spirit of internationalism impressed him. It was no less a question of a refreshingly new attitude of mind they brought to all kinds of social and political issues. Bhagat Singh was inspired by the revolutionary potential of the movement—the kind of revolution that was possible. The romance of anarchist principle of 'propaganda by deed' and of the grandeur of self-sacrifice appeared to exercise a stronger pull on his mind in the face of the long and difficult preparation for a proletarian revolution. However, he had meanwhile given a new meaning to the anarchist methods and to personal sacrifice.

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The young Bhagat Singh had been nurtured on the stories of the patriotism, daring and sacrifices of the Ghadarites.¹ His family was known for their activist radical nationalism. He was only 8 years old when Kartar Singh Sarabha and a few other Ghadarites used to visit his father for advice and money. Many of those heroes were executed soon thereafter. Bhagat Singh regarded the martyr Kartar Singh Sarabha as his hero. Three among his senior comrades Bhai Parmanand, Ramsaran Das and Sachindranath Sanyal had been prominent leaders of the failed Ghadar project. All the three were convicted in Conspiracy cases and punished to imprisonment and transportation for life, but released in 1921. Sanyal was the founder of the Hindustan Republican Association; its objectives were similar to those of the Ghadar Party. *Bandee Jeewan* by Sachindranath Sanyal, the first historical account by an insider of the plans and activities of the rebels,² was 'a basic text book' for nationalists which Bhagat Singh and his friends read and discussed. The Rowlatt Committee Report of 1918, containing the British Government's secret intelligence version of the Ghadar movement, was another source book for them. Bhagat Singh was also familiar with subsequent sufferings of the families and children of these patriots (*desh-bhagats*) and with their amazing stead-fastness in the midst of exceptional tribulations.

In November 1928, a Hindi magazine *Chaand* brought out the special *Chaand Phansi Ank* (Special *Chaand* edition on Executions) that included a total of 54 articles on the Indian martyrs in the cause of freedom. Twenty seven of these were on the Ghadar martyrs.³ Practically all of these were authored by Bhagat Singh though published under different names. Many of these were published earlier in the *Kirti*. These articles provide a fairly good idea of the extent to which Bhagat Singh seemed mesmerized by their convictions and deeds. Kartar Singh Sarabha was described as his guru, a friend, and a comrade. 'One is amazed to think of what he at the age of 19 was able to do', wrote Bhagat Singh. 'Such courage! Such self-confidence! So much of self-denial and passionate commitment has been rarely seen earlier. There have not been many people born in India who could be, in real terms, described as *baghi* (rebels). But among those few leaders Kartar Singh's name is on top of the list'.⁴

What came out prominently in these writings was Bhagat Singh's Fascination for their religion-like spirit of nationalism, anarchist orientation and a very emotional fondness for acts of individual heroism and sacrifice, particularly martyrdom. The Ghadar Party, as he wrote, was composed of those who 'offered their heads' at the altar of the 'goddess of freedom'.

1. For detail, see Harish K. Puri, *Ghadar Movement Ideology, Organisation and Strategy*, Amritsar : Guru Nanak Dev University, 1993.

2. Sachindranath Sanyal, *Bandee Jeewan* (Hindi), [first published 1922], Delhi : Atma Ram and Sons, 1963, rpt.

3. Shaheed Bhagat Singh and his Comrades, *Chaand Phansi Ank : Chonvian Shaheedi Jeewanian* (Punjabi), ed. Harish Jain, Chandigarh : Lokgeet Parkashan, 2006.

4. *Ibid.*, p.117.

Like a hurricane they came from somewhere, stoked the fire... of rebellion and were ultimately themselves consumed by it.

Bhagat Singh recognized the fact that 'deficiency of organisation' became a major reason of failure of that movement. But more significant to him was their self-sacrificing passion : 'Revolutionary sentiment ran in every vein of theirs'.⁵

The political goal of Hindustan Republican Army founded by Sachindranath Sanyal in 1924 was, like that of the Ghadarites, the founding of a federal republic of the United States of India. A close study of its programme of action points to its similarity with the one adopted by the Ghadar Party on 1913. The revival of Naujawan Bharat Sabha in April 1928 by the Kirti organisation in collaboration with Bhagat Singh provided for closer association of Bhagat Singh with the former Ghadarites. The Kirti Ghadarites, many of whom had received new education and training in Soviet Russia, represented a shift in their conception and method of revolution. The impact of the Russian Revolution, reading of communist literature, and the contact with Kirti Ghadarites led Bhagat Singh and his comrades towards a fresh thinking on their objectives and methods.

In his recollections of that time Sohan Singh Josh wrote that Kartar Singh Sarabha was, for all young men of that time, 'the model of death-defying audacity, fearlessness and burning hatred against the British Raj'. Bhagat Singh's lectures on 'Sarabha Day' celebrations and on other occasions at the conferences of Naujawan Bharat Sabha and the Student Union inspired the youth. Ajoy Ghosh, who became the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India recalled later, 'I literally worshipped him'. To hear Bhagat Singh 'talk inspiringly about my hero was a great pleasure. I began to feel a liking for Bhagat Singh'.⁶

Writing about that phase in Bhagat Singh's thinking, Shiv Verma recalled Bhagat Singh's fascination for anarchist ideas. He found that 'Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev in particular were more influenced by the Russian anarchist Bakunin'.⁷ Similar was the observation of Principal Chhabildas. The Ghadarites, as was mentioned above, were also inspired by anarchist writings of Har Dayal in the *Ghadar* weekly. 'Anarchist ideas had a dominant place in the thinking of Har Dayal', observed Harnam Singh Tundilat.⁸

Beginnings of a new way of looking at things may be traced from Bhagat Singh's contact with the *Kirti* and the revival of Naujawan Bharat Sabha in April 1928 with the efforts of Sohan Singh Josh. The *Kirti*, as Josh observed, 'represented the continuation of the Ghadar Movement in a new way'.⁹ The historical conditions in the late 1920s were very different from those of the first world war. Given the

5. *Ohnan de rag rag vich inqlabi jazba smaya hoye si.*

6. Sohan Singh Josh, *My Meetings with Bhagat Singh and other Revolutionaries*, Communist Party of India Publication, 1976, p. 16.

7. Bhupendra Hooja (ed.), *A Martyrs Notebook*, Jaipur, Indian Book Chronicle, Annexure II, 1994, p.27.

8. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, p. 171.

9. Josh, *My Meetings with Bhagat Singh*, p. 13.

new political orientation towards socialism, it seemed appropriate to go into the weaknesses in the Ghadar project and the reasons of its failure and to draw necessary lessons. It was becoming clear that individual heroism or terrorist action could not bring about a revolution. They needed to work among peasants and workers for a long time and to organise them.

Shiv Verma, one of the closest comrades of Bhagat Singh, described it as 'a shift from anarchism to socialism'. Given a degree of new political orientation and training at Moscow, the Kirti Ghadarites were themselves looking at their earlier ideas and strategy in a critical manner. Ideologically committed to proletarian revolution for the ultimate objective of socialism, they wanted now to awaken and organise the peasants and workers by rejecting the path of individual heroism and terrorist action. Shiv Verma, recollected later that, 'the credit to bring Bhagat Singh from anarchism to socialism goes to two persons—Comrade Sohan Singh Josh and Lala Chhabildas'. Josh impressed upon Bhagat Singh the futility of violent or terrorist methods and its counter revolutionary impact.

The shift at the level of ideas at the meeting of Hindustan Republican Army held in September 1928 was symbolized by the addition of the word 'Socialist' to the existing name. Appreciating that 'criticism and independent thinking are the two indispensable qualities of a revolutionary', they came to review the weaknesses which contributed to the failure of the Ghadar movement. Besides lack of a proper organisation and absence of required secrecy in the working of the Ghadarites, Bhagat Singh pointed in his 'Letter to the Young Political Workers' to something even more important. That was : 'the ignorance, apathy and sometimes active opposition of the masses'. So he advised : 'The party should start with the work of mass propaganda. It is very essential'.¹⁰

Two of the most important tasks, Bhagat Singh told Shiv Verma and other comrades in an intimate meeting at Kanpur, were to connect with the people and to organise them (*Sangathan ka Janavaadikaran*). However, as we notice in the choice of their activities and preparations, the hold of ideas of dramatic militant action, individual heroism and self sacrifice remained strong.

Josh wrote about his meetings and discussions with Bhagat Singh during December, 1928. According to him, 'After a few months of functioning of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha two main trends emerged in the body. One trend was represented by Bhagat Singh and his comrades. It was a minority trend as it became very clear after my discussion with him. Bhagat Singh wanted to do something quick, through the use of bombs and pistols in order to politically awaken the slumbering youth and students ... something spectacular that would make them sit up and do something'. Political education of slumbering masses was a long process. 'Our young hot blood cannot wait for that long', he would assert. His main line of argument was that 'a single deed makes more propaganda

10. D. N. Gupta (ed.), *Bhagat Singh—Selected Speeches and Writings*, New Delhi : National Book Trust of India, 2007, p.47.

in a few days than a thousand pamphlets'.¹¹

Principal Chhabildas made a similar observation. In the ideologically divided Naujawan Bharat Sabha, as he observed, one group favoured the Soviet path. Bhagat Singh belonged to the group that supported the path of Irish revolution which focused on collection of weapons. He and his comrades believed that no revolution was possible without the use of weapons and bomb explosions.¹²

Josh admitted that he could not oppose Bhagat Singh's line of thought and action because he was not yet well-versed in Marxism. 'I too was raw and immature. I did not know so much of Marxism then as to differentiate between terrorism and Marxism'. Secondly, the Ghadar Party ideology of armed struggle and Ghadar heroes' unprecedented sacrifices had a firm hold on my thinking.¹³ Bhagat Singh's comrades, Yash Pal and Shiv Verma, observed separately that though socialism was accepted as the ideology of HSRA, that did not mean they had come to understand Marxism or historical materialism. 'In practice we stuck to our old individual style of actions. Our decision to organize the peasants and workers remained only a pious wish.'

Indeed, during his stay at Calcutta during December 1928, Bhagat Singh's major effort was focused on persuading Jatindranath Das to help the HSRA in training his men in bomb making and setting up factories for that purpose. By February 1929 Agra had become a centre for manufacture of bombs. The raiding police party which arrested Sukhdev, his comrade and the chief organiser of activities of the HSRA for the Punjab, in April 1929 from their bomb-making house at Lahore, found bombs they had prepared and also bomb-making material. Bomb factories were also established at Saharanpur and Rohtak.

It seemed that two conflicting imperatives continued to jostle in their minds for attention. The message that Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt sent to the Punjab Students Conference on 19 October 1929 symbolised one. It stated categorically:

Today we cannot ask the youth to take to pistols and bombs... In the coming Lahore Session the Congress is to give a call for a fierce fight for the independence of the country. The youth will have to bear a great burden in this difficult time in the history of the nation... They have to awaken the crores of slum-dwellers of the industrial areas and villagers living in worn-out cottages.¹⁴

The other imperative was reflected in the opening words of the 'Manifesto' of the HSRA circulated at the Congress Session of December 1929: 'The food on which the tender plant of liberty thrives is the blood of the martyr'. On 23 December an attempt was made to blow up the special train of the Viceroy Lord Irwin. Gandhi's criticism of that action ('Cult of the Bomb') was followed by a cogently argued

11. Josh, *My Meetings with Bhagat Singh*, pp.16-17.

12. Manorama Dewan, *Inquilabi Yatra—Sita Devi aur Principal Chhabildas ki Jeevani*, New Delhi: National Book Trust of India, 2006, p.40.

13. Josh, *My Meetings with Bhagat Singh*, p. 17.

14. Gupta, *Bhagat Singh*, p. 36.

defense of the action in a pamphlet entitled. 'The Philosophy of the Bomb'. It concluded with these words :

We shall have our revenge—a people's righteous revenge on the tyrant. Let cowards fall back and cringe for compromise and peace. We ask not for mercy and we give no quarter. Ours is a war to the end- to Victory or Death'.¹⁵

It is believed that Bhagwati Charan's draft had been shown to Bhagat Singh in jail. Vaishampayan's eye-witness account of the death of Bhagwati Charan Vohra, while testing a bomb on 28 May 1930, pointed to a vigorous activity by Bhagat Singh's comrades for preparation of bombs.¹⁶ Meanwhile, two of the prominent Kabul-based Kirti-Ghadarites, Harjap Singh and Gurmukh Singh, had in a special article in the *Kirti* monthly of February 1930 squarely condemned and emphasized the futility of terror creating methods of killing British officers. the intent clearly was to caution Bhagat Singh and his radical comrades :

A few years earlier we ourselves were supporters of that path. The lesson we learn from the revolutions in other parts of the world is that terrorism, instead of helping towards revolution, had proved to be harmful.¹⁷

In a somewhat similar vein, Sukhdev, in his last letter to Bhagat Singh, on 9 October 1930, questioned the sense and utility of the bomb outrages by their comrades after the arrest of both of them.¹⁸ In the solitude of the prison cell after his conviction in the Saunders' murder case, Bhagat Singh appears to have done a more concentrated and serious study and reflected on the correct path for revolution. We notice an impressive churning in Bhagat Singh's mind in his three most important writings in jail during the last 6 months of his life.

Talking about the turning point in his revolutionary career, in his *Why I am an Atheist*, Bhagat Singh wrote candidly about the transition in his thought since the Kakori Conspiracy Case :

Up to that period, I was only a romantic idealist revolutionary. Then I began to study. My previous faith and convictions underwent a remarkable modification. The romance of the violent methods alone which was so prominent among our predecessors, was replaced by serious ideas. No more mysticism, no more blind faith. Realism became our cult. Use of force justifiable when resorted to as a terrible necessity' non-violence as policy indispensable for all mass movements.

That was also the burden of his argument in the Introduction to *The Dreamland*, written by his senior comrade and a former Ghadarite, Ram Saran Das : 'The revolutionaries know better than anybody else that the socialist society

15. Ibid., p. 152.

16. Shiv Verma, *Sansmritiyan* (Hindi), Delhi : Lok Prakashan Grahya, 1967, 5th edn., pp. 165-67.

17. *Kirti* (Punjabi), February 1930, pp. 9-13.

18. Malvinder Singh Waraich and Gurdev Singh (eds.), *The Hanging of Bhagat Singh : Complete Judgement and other Documents*, Chandigarh : Unistar Books, 2005, Annexure 6, pp. 205-7.

cannot be brought about by violent means'.

'Our movement is passing through a very important phase at present', Bhagat Singh wrote in his 'Letter to the *Young Worker*', dated 2 February 1931, less than 50 days before his death. Mahatma Gandhi was released from jail on 26 January 1931 and reference was made to the points relating to constitutional reforms on which the Congress was likely to make a compromise. Bhagat Singh tended to educate 'the Young Political Workers' that compromise was not a bad thing; in fact it was a step forward in the struggle. Revolutionaries may feel disgusted, he cautioned, but that would be wrong. "Leave sentimentalism aside, he advised. 'Be prepared to face the facts. Revolution is a very difficult task. It is beyond the power of any man to make a revolution'. And, he emphasized :

Terrorism is a confession that the Revolutionary mentality has not penetrated down to the masses. It is thus a confession of our failure... Its history is a history of failures in every land—in France, in Russia, in the Balkan countries, in Germany, in Spain, everywhere. It bears the germs of defeat within itself.... it is aloof from the life of the masses and once installed on the throne runs the risk of being petrified into tyranny... The inspiring ideal for all and sundry workers should not be that of dying for the cause but of living for the cause and living usefully and worthily. You shall have to be very sober. The programme requires at least twenty years for its fulfilment.... It requires neither the emotion nor the death, but the life of constant struggle, suffering and sacrifice. Crush your individuality first.

It appeared that through that letter in the solitude of the prison cell, Bhagat Singh was trying to settle scores with his own erstwhile fixations. That is what Noorani referred to when he observed that Bhagat Singh 'had the capacity to brood and to torment his soul over the past'.¹⁹ At the same time, Bhagat Singh seemed to feel a sense of fulfilment:

My name has become a symbol of revolution. The ideals and sacrifices of the revolutionary party have raised me very high. So exalted is my place that in case I continued to live I can in no case rise higher than this.... Who could be luckier than me ? I am proud of myself these days.

That is what he was reported to have told a group of his comrades in the same jail on 22 March 1931, a day before he was executed.²⁰ Bhagat Singh's passionate admirers would celebrate the sacrifice of the martyr as glorious in itself, but ironically, regret the absence of a possibility of organising themselves

19. A.G. Noorani, *The Trial of Bhagat Singh : Politics of Justice*, New Delhi : Oxford India Paperbacks, 2005, p.258.

20. Verindra Sandhu (ed.), *Sardar Bhagat Singh : Pattar aur Dastavez* (Hindi), Delhi : Rajpal & Sons, 1977, pp. 97-98.

for revolution. 'In the aftermath', as Noorani observed, 'there was depression all around. The Lahore Conspiracy Case dealt a death blow to the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association'.²¹

The worldview and ideas of Bhagat Singh and his close comrades represented both a shift from and a continuity with the Ghadar framework of ideas. The Ghadarites were men of action, not thinkers. They were not tormented by demands of making a neat choice between diverse or conflicting political ideas and methods. 'Die for the cause, if necessary' was indeed a shared impulse at the time of action. Bhagat Singh, on the other hand, was professedly a man of reason. He appeared to reject terrorism and felt that living for a cause was more important than dying for a cause. There was a conscious effort at the level of ideas to move from utopian socialist ideas to scientific socialism (*Dreamland*), from romantic revolutionary nationalist ideas to those of Marx and Lenin, and from anarchist and terrorist cult of the bomb and 'propaganda by deed' to the priority of awakening the masses and organising workers and peasants for mass struggle. Yet, as a man of action he could not be doctrinaire. He also recognized the contribution of the Gandhian struggle for awakening and mobilizing vast numbers, including the workers and peasants, while rejecting Gandhi's non-violence as a creed. In fact, Bhagat Singh wanted his organisation to work as 'a militant wing of the mainstream national movement' in order to save it from the vested interests. However, the romance of the violent methods and of the grandeur of self-sacrifice and the spell of revolutionary nationalism of his ideal, Kartar Singh Sarabha presisted. But Bhagat Singh had mean-while convinced himself in a rational fashion that the cause of awakening and rousing the people for political action would be better served by his self-sacrifice.

21. Noorani, *The Trial of Bhagat Singh*, p. 254.

LALA HAR DAYAL : HIS RISE AND FALL

Tejwant Singh Gill*

The poetic corpus, the Ghadarites used to publish in the journal carrying the name *Ghadar*, contains two poems, glorifying Har Dayal (1884-1939), his extreme self-sacrifice and great moral courage. Thus goes the first in English translation:

In America has settled Har Dayal, the compassionate one,
In *Ghadar*, he has laid bare the evil of the English rule,
With a lion's roar has helped to cast aside the load,
Claimed love of the foresaken motherland,
Showed the English unworthy to withstand our zeal,
'Let us return to wage war' was his clarion call,
Cowards will flee and the valiant ones win, he foretold.¹

In this poem, he is acclaimed as a compassionate scholar who had come to settle in the USA to enlighten his countrymen about their miserable plight and lead them on the path of salvation. In the second, is recalled the harassment to which he was subjected by the administration for delivering very fearless speeches. His speeches had begun to cast mesmerising impact upon the minds and hearts of those, mostly Indians, who ardently flocked to hear him speak in public. Eloquently, he used to convince them about their birthright to win national freedom from the colonial rule imposed by the British. No doubt, he presented himself as an inveterate opponent of colonialism, practised by England in India.

At this stage, the Indians, particularly the Punjabis, could idolize his discourse only as the expression of fantasy. They were more concerned with the discrimination meted out to them in the factories and the fields, where they had to work as wage earners on daily basis. They had to go there to earn their living and for all the hardwork they put in, they were castigated and treated as inferior beings, lesser than even those who, from their own stock, were ill-disposed towards them. Har Dayal's importance lay in making them aware of their national plight beyond the personal that was in store for them in the USA. To impel them to look beyond their immediate survival and feel for their motherland was the impulse that they got from his speeches. Hearing his ringing words was like rising above their monologic isolation to the level of dialogic interaction, which filled them with enthusiasm. Since his discourse used to be incendiary in the first instance, so his listeners would be enthused a lot. However, they were yet to

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1. Tejwant Singh Gill, poetry and prose of the *Ghadar* included in *The Ghadar movement* (2113) Punjabi University, Patiala.

forge their enthusiasm into a deeply-felt experience. It was a fantasy yet but in enhancing and making it crucial, Har Dayal played the most memorable role.

Several factors, relating to his family-background, upbringing, education and glorification in adolescence and youth, enabled him supremely to assume this task, so dangerous at that historical juncture. In 1884, he was born in a so-called lower middle class Brahmin family of Punjabi antecedents settled in Delhi. Delhi was the capital of the colonial rule, which the British had come to exercise over a major part of the subcontinent. His father was a Reader in the district court, meant to administer justice to the people. From early childhood, Har Dayal began to show brilliance, particularly in his studies, that in fact was the chief mode for doing so. This brilliance seemed all the more dazzling because he was short-sighted and unhealthy from the moment of his birth. Had his health been robust, his brilliance might have been regarded less dazzling and the aura that grew around it would have been less luminous. Here, ill-health proved a blessing in disguise in an ancillary way. Later in life, this aura persisted so as to cast a magical effect upon his listeners who began to turn into his admirers from his college days. Several stories, though not completely factual but substantially true, were always on their lips. It was believed that solitary reading of a book was enough for him to memorize it word by word. Likewise, it was held that he topped in all the examinations he appeared during his career, with a score that seemed unsurpassable then. The fact of the matter was that, in both the subjects, English and History, he scored very high marks enabling him to figure among the topmost ones.

Two other factors came along to further enhance and replenish his glorious image. A judge, part and parcel of the upper class, regarded both by himself and the people around as the elite, offered the hand of his daughter to him. The offer must have been accepted by him as recognition of his brilliance and by his family as a divine boon, which, on the score of this excellence, the son eminently deserved. The other factor was the offer of double scholarship for higher studies in Oxford, the most celebrated university of England. This offer was received after he had done M.A. in English and History. In the academic world, the offer of this scholarship enhanced his image so much that eminent persons, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, talked of him in glorifying terms and began to value meeting and exchanging views with him. Even political personalities began to feel that his impressions and observations were meaningful though they were not crystalized yet. The general impression went that, if not in the wide social world, in the academic sphere at least, he was destined to carve out an eminent niche for his own self as well as for the glory of his motherland.

As a result, the impulse to critically judge and soberly evaluate the nature of his genius did not strike either him or his admirers. The fact of the matter was that his overt memory was phenomenal. Such a memory impelled the mind to gather as much knowledge as possible. However, the urge to reflect upon it did not grow in commensurate measure. As a result, did not develop originality that could help his thought to delve deep into the present, relate the past in a historical

way and perceive the future as distinct from both. Har Dayal's problem, occasioned by self-awareness of the reflective sort was precisely this: he could either glorify the past and subject the present or future to it or idolize the future and regard past and future as ancillary in the long run. No wonder, in the beginning, he glorified the Aryan past and found salvation for the present in its total revival. Later on in life, he idolized the future and hoped that the problems of the present and the past would not cast their shadows upon its resplendence. Evidence of the first may be gathered from his *Our Educational Problem*² and that of the second from *Hints for Self Culture*.

What his contribution to the cause of the struggle could be both in the short and long run, did not strike him in a precise way. It also did not dawn upon the simple but genuine minds of his admirers that he could be by their side so long as no danger lurked upon his head. Nurturing self-admiration in his own mind, it was admiration, pure and simple, that he expected from others. Of course, he was blessed with encyclopedic memory that helped him to embellish his speeches and writings with quotations drawn from various sources. First, it was Christianity that cast its spell during his early youth. Then the ancient Hindu scriptures came, which subsequently determined the *leit-motif* of his articulation. Anarchism and nihilism followed, which impelled him to express heterodox views. In the last stage of his life, he became a votary of human rights. Advocacy of Esperanto motivated him towards the cohesion of all expression and communication, without searching for coherence. The result was that rhetoric had become his mode of expression and communication, which equipped him as well as his readers and listeners with fantasy, far removed from history and reality.

In England, another sort of destiny was in store for him. He established cordial contacts with scholars he was to work with in the field of higher research. But he had not yet launched upon his academic work that other bonds developed with speed and involvement that subverted the academic contacts. So the academic purpose, so conducive for his career, disappeared from his view. Before he could proceed on this trajectory, his heart was won over by Indian emigres who aspired to free the motherland from the colonial rule. Youngmen, like Veer Savarkar (1883-1966), were aspiring to chalk out some way to bring salvation to their motherland. At this stage, they could either emulate the 1857 mutineers or follow the example of the individual assassins, precedents of which were so poignantly available from killings organized, and sometimes executed by the anarchists and nihilists, active in the European countries, particularly Russia.

2. Har Dayal, *Our Educational Problem*. This comprises a collection of about one hundred brief articles written by Lala Har Dayal from 1908 onward for the journal *Punjabee*. Obviously they were written by him after his return from England. Having settled in Lahore, he had become an ardent advocate of the ancient Aryan culture. In each and every step the colonial rule took in the field of education, he found outrageous, meant to spoil the integrity and sublimity of India's past, the quality of its ethos and originality of the Sanskrit language. A decade or so later, they appeared in book-form, with Lala Lajpat Rai's preface written in glowing terms.

Trauma, which acquired the potential of drama, resulted as a result of which he lost interest in academic pursuit for which scholarship had been granted to him by the colonial rule. So he turned away from the academic pursuit and got more and more involved in the activities of the Indian emigres aspiring for the freedom of the motherland. Exiles from India, like Madame Cama (1861-1936), then based in Paris, became the focus of his interest. What was so far traumatic began to figure as dramatic, with the result that he resolved to return the money received as scholarship from the colonial rule. Without any resources at his disposal, he lived a very indigent life. Now he was not a scholar deputed by the colonial rule, so he could no longer stay in England. Along with his newly-wedded wife, he had to return to India. His paternal family was despondent but accepted, with regret, what the dearly loved son had done. His in-laws were outraged so much that his marital life came to an abrupt end. They refused to let their daughter be dragged into the wilderness from which there was no escape for him then. This must have outraged him because his estrangement from, Sundar Rani his extremely graceful wife as her name denoted was rendered inevitable by her father. She had earlier given birth to a son who expired as an infant. So forcibly estranged, the husband and the wife could not live together any more in the future. He also did not divorce her and the daughter she bore later, always nurtured the strange feeling of having a father, disconnected from her for the whole of her life.

Sundar Rani, his wife, led a very solitary life, getting old much before her age. With no exchange of letters in between, she turned completely reticent, almost spectral. If at all she could have any sustenance, it came only from her younger sister who was married to Dr Tara Chand, the notable historian and archaeologist of the time. Subsequently, Har Dayal did relate with a couple of western women but he could not identify with them as he had done with her, now forcibly separated from him. If the first, Fried Hauswirth jilted and to some extent humiliated him, the second, Agda Erikson, showed devotion but without any corresponding response. The shock he got as a result of forced separation from his Indian wife, persisted all through his life. In the days of his retreat from political engagement, he began writing a letter to her each month but that brought no solace to her and she expired several years before he died of heart-failure. Such was the traumatic-cum-dramatic potential that took him first to Europe and then to America in the first half of the 20th century's second decade.

The situation in which he found himself after forced separation from his wife and the fear of arrest on account of his unbridled condemnation of the colonial rule was marked by acute tension. If the political zeal impelled him to play some startlingly dramatic role then the marital despair hurled him into a vortex of despair. One urged him to undertake great risk for the freedom of his motherland and the other overwhelmed him with acute sense of futility. Optimism and pessimism collided in his mind and he was unable to reconcile the two into sobriety. It was in this state that he left India fearing imminent arrest. The prestigious personalities who, charmed by his brilliance had bonded with him, came to his

rescue and helped him escape from India. In her '*Reminiscences of Puran Singh*', Maya Devi, wife of the most visionary Sikh of the time, has narrated how her husband deputed his Muslim friend, Dr. Khuda Daad, to help him in this daring but risky venture. Another thing that gets evident from this incident is that persons who dared undertake the risk to help him, did so without any communal consideration in mind. They were charmed by his brilliance, which was enough of a reason to come to his rescue.

Having escaped from arrest, Har Dayal reached England and from there he sought refuge in France. The unresolved conflict between hope and despair had its toll, with the result that he found himself afflicted with acute depression on the one hand and tuberculosis on the other. To recuperate from both, he retired to an island, regarded very peaceful then. It was the island of Martinique, peaceful in contrast to Europe, then torn by political turmoil. Among exercises undertaken for mental and physical recuperation, was *samadhi* (meditation) the practice of which was to obsess him for the rest of his life. More than a physical- psychological exercise, it had spiritual meaning for him, not only in the individual but the cultural context as well. It required of him to put singular focus upon some issue, with total concentration. This concentration must have revealed to him that freedom from all rites and rituals, traditions and ceremonies, beliefs and faiths was the quintessence of life. No wonder, from that moment, he became an advocate of anarchism-cum-nihilism and sexual freedom. At the same time, he mastered the ancient Indian scriptures, particularly the Buddhist ones and the languages associated with them i.e. Sanskrit and Prakrit.

On arrival in the USA, he was appointed lecturer to teach these subjects in the University of Stanford based in San Francisco. Besides teaching in the university, Har Dayal had enough time and scope to deliver lectures on his favourite topics relating to anarchism-cum-nihilism and sexual freedom, etc. He also fondled with Marxism, resulting in the writing of an essay, in which he hailed Karl Marx as a modern *rishi*. Perhaps, this was the earliest writing on Karl Marx by any Indian intellectual. Of course in this article, he confined himself only to admire Marx's moral qualities, his sense of sacrifice and dedication. His ideology, economic theory and historical perspective precluded his perception. No wonder, Carlyle's theory of the Hero, he found more meaningful than class consciousness and conflict. Just for drawing the attention of the Indians to Marx's sense of sacrifice and dedication, the article drew historical importance. Otherwise, his overwhelming concern was with Bakunin, to disseminate whose teaching, he used to deliver lectures, which later on posed a danger to his stay in the USA.

The listeners of his lectures were invariably men and women, from the upper or middle class, who relished the novelty of ideas without undergoing their practical implications. This would leave Har Dayal disconsolate, eager to encounter listeners who could dare aspire for the improbable if not the impossible. Such listeners he found among the Punjabi youth, enrolled in the University of Berkley but talking of things back home with nostalgia that could turn anti-colonial. During

the holidays, they worked in the nearby fields to lay by money for expenditure as students or trainees. They led a life in which optimism had a fair share but it did not delude them with the false hope of prosperous living there. Alternately, they were not driven into gloom by the exigencies of circumstances. This was a way of life, quite the opposite of that Har Dayal had so far led. Rather than fly in the air on the wings of false hope or sink into gloom with inertia staring in the face, this way of living stood for catching life by the forelock, if not in the immediate present but definitely in the not-distant future. So Har Dayal took no time in getting close to them and living like them as they did in the Nalanda Hostel, jointly managed by them.

At the places they went for work during the holidays, they met their brethren, come from starving Punjab only to make a living for themselves as well as the family-members left behind. From peasants living from hand to mouth in their native land, they had ended up as wage earners in the farms and factories of California. Whereas interminable scarcity had faced them in the native land, now they were reduced to whims and vagaries of those who gave them jobs in the alien land. First acquaintance and then association with them, opened up before Har Dayal the prospect of a front for freeing the motherland from the clutches of the colonial rule. In consultation with the most active and restive of them all, the journal, *Ghadar*, was started first in Urdu, then in Punjabi and Bengali and last of all in Hindi, Gujarati and Pushto. Five articles of Har Dayal, upon the peasantry, the press, human destiny, renewed asceticism and the crisis of Christianity appeared in the journal in the Punjabi edition. Done probably by Kartar Singh Sarabha, these articles were more theoretical than practical. For example, the article upon the peasantry had nothing to do with the Indian or the Punjabi peasantry in historical perspective. It was like a mythical tale depicting the peasantry as inert multitude being exploited by all sections of society without even an iota of resistance. So were the other articles, which did pronounce prophetic judgements of the following sort:

If India has to produce men of conscience, she has to put an end to slavery. If slavery has to be ended, it is essential to create men of conscience.

In the same vein went the following judgement:

It is bad indeed when practice falls short of the ideal. But it is infinitely worse when theory itself betrays its trust and panders to our lower nature.

Whereas the other articles on colonial oppression, political discrimination, exploitation, subservience of the traditional leadership etc appeared anonymously, only Har Dayal's articles were published under his proper name. Obviously, this distinction sought to impart prestige to his writing in spite of the fact they did not enhance the understanding of the social and political reality prevailing in the motherland or the nativeland for that matter. Their significance lay in imparting courage, in strengthening the resolve to change the social and political reality, so

impinging upon the life of the suffering humanity.

In the same rhetorical vein went his speeches. The following extract from a speech delivered by him is enough to illustrate this contention:

Desist from your petty religious dissensions and turn your thoughts toward the salvation of your country. What work you do, do it for the sake of your country...Collect money and get the youth educated in America in order that they may become equipped to serve...Prepare now to sacrifice yourself...As long as the Indians remained in subjection to the British, they would not be treated as equals by Americans or any other nations.

His rhetoric, supplanted by scholarship and like an arrow aimed at the issue of the motherland's deliverance, endeared him to the Punjabi youth and wage earners who, in face of challenges on the American soil, began to realize the urgency of their country's independence from the colonial rule. In their simplicity, they believed that frontal warfare, rather than, war of position, was the mode to achieve the cherished goal. War of position would have required of them to carry on their struggle at all levels, cultural, social, educational, political and philosophical. Even before engaging them in the battlefield, war of position would have convinced the British that to persist in retaining rule over India was indeed a lost cause. Strange as it might have seemed, Har Dayal's articles urged them to invite confrontation. It was a different matter that privately he felt the moment for confrontation had not arrived. Waiting for several decades was the need of the hour as he made clear in a letter to his brother.

For the Punjabi Ghadarites, this was not to be for the historical juncture appeared to favour a leap into the vortex of frontal warfare against the British government, ruling over colonies spread over the whole world. The First World War was imminent in which Germany was the chief antagonist. After its unification in the second half of the 19th century, Germany had begun to claim a place under the sun. Its implication was that Germany also dreamt of becoming a world-wide colonial power and it could be possible only by grabbing colonies from the British imperialism. So to deal a mortal blow to the British imperialism, the tactic of rendering help to its enemies was held forth, which to the Ghadarites appeared as strategy of tremendous potential. After all, in the 18th century, their forefathers had employed it with great effect upon the soil of Punjab against the two-pronged threat from the foreign invader and his native collaborators. Their commonsense did not let them doubt its efficacy and veracity in the new historical context. Har Dayal's mesmerizing rhetoric also did not let them realize that it could not succeed in the 20th century against a colonial power that not only ruled over a large part of the world but also had vast navy to frustrate any attempt to deliver weapons to its enemies. In Maia Ramnath's words, it was a crucial conjuncture:

The farmers and agricultural workers whose discontentment was acute, started looking for someone who could consolidate the existing modes of activity, unite the students and the workers,

*channel the pervasive and building unrest and beef up the political content of the cultural and social reform projects. This person turned out to be Har Dayal.*³

This was largely true. Har Dayal's advent had these implications. After all, his articles and speeches, selfless activities and capabilities had awarded presence to the visibility of what the Indians, workers and students, aspired to do. The authority awarded to Har Dyal, in recognition of his eloquence, self-denial and academic brilliance, enjoined upon him to forge them into a unity and give voice to their programme and perspective. He was also required to enlighten them how this tactic, apparently of great potential, could prove unviable for reasons beyond their control. Instead, he enhanced its supposed efficacy and veracity by sharing stage with the German counsel in America. In a gathering addressed by both of them, the German counsel assured all help, of money and weapons, without realizing that any revelation of the sort could jeopardize the whole scheme. As the leading ideologue of such a risky adventure, Har Dayal should have armed himself with awareness of the German potential, the discrepancy held out by the assurance and the risk involved in executing it. He should also have pondered over the alternative strategy in case this scheme failed, which a person of good sense could have foreseen under the circumstances. Sadly enough, his thinking nurtured by academic resources and little attuned to unity of thought and practice in the imperialist era had neither the intuitive instinct nor the intellectual elaboration to unravel these complexities. His awareness if any of the then German polity was limited only to the assurance held out by the German counsel, from a diplomatic angle of a short-time tactic rather than long drawn-out strategy.

The crucial issue to ponder over here is to determine to what extent Har Dayal rose to the occasion to become the chief ideologue and organizer of the Ghadar Party. If as an ideologue Har Dayal was required to forge political strategy of the multiple sort in terms of a war of position, then he missed to win this epithet in spite of the great promise, he held out at the initial stage. Though the time was too short at their disposal, the Ghadarites, like Kartar Singh Sarabha, did strive for a strategy beyond tactic. It was evident from his effort to form a block of the army personnel in the lower ranks, village brigands who, from sheer tenacity, were disposed to oppose the colonial rule and the collaterals who could align with him under the impact of filiation. Of course, this could not be a consolidated bloc as opposed to that of the administrators, feudal lords, police personnel and village zaildars and lambardars constituted to nip the revolt in the bud. Har Dayal could, at the most, lend mundane ear to discussion around these issues but his rhetoric, knowledge, anarchism and nihilism regarded it below their dignity to spend their energy upon their discourse and discussion. There is no denying the fact that Sarabha strove to do so only in a state of emergency. Its need had not arisen from his deep thinking. In Bhai Santokh Singh's case, its origin arose from the depth of

3. Maia Ramanath, *Haj to Utopia* (2011) University of California Press, USA.

his thinking. But that was when the venture had failed and no way was there to forge ahead. As a result, his priority was for starting *Kirti* and organizing the Kirti-Kisan Party. In the light of what his young associates strove to do, to term Har Dayal as the ideologue or organizer of the Ghadar Party in the full semantics of the word would be an exaggeration though the credit of it in the initial stage could not be denied to him. As an inspirer, his great importance lay in awarding it presence beyond the visibility it had before his advent. To achieve this within six months was remarkable, the importance of which could not be denied.

With the fear of his arrest resulting in his hasty retreat, the edifice, raised on the foundation of his eloquence and prestige collapsed in no time. In hastening his retreat, he did not act as an astute ideologue and acute strategist either. As Antonio Gramsci⁴ has so poignantly put, an acute strategist and astute ideologue was required to act like the commander, willing to leave a wrecked ship only when all the passengers have left. From the zone of danger, he should depart only when his followers feel that it is essential for the cause undertaken under his command. This credit could not be awarded to Har Dayal who jumped the bail in haste and sought refuge in Europe. He did not stay idle and strove to play an active role in rendering help to those, including the Ghadarites who had resolved to organize revolt in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. But all he wanted on his own terms, which was unpalatable for other, already in league with the German authorities.

Real credit went to his former associates in the USA who did not feel discouraged or let down and continued to inspire the emigres to go to India for waging war against the British. Though the reports were varying, his departure seemed to impart fresh incentive to their activities so far rendered dim by his rhetoric and brilliance. On reaching Germany, Har Dayal found that the attitude meted out to political émigrés by the German authorities was rather dictatorial. It convinced him of the futility of seeking any help from that quarter. Though he was right in his view at the preliminary level, but he sought to know nothing about the turmoil going on in Germany, the revolutionary change that under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), held the promise of granting liberation not only to the German people but also to the suffering humanity of the whole world. Also his erudition, supplanted entirely by academism but wholly lacking in awareness, could not match the survival-instinct, the members of the Berlin group had inculcated by ingratiating themselves with the German authorities. Whereas the Ghadarites were going to figure valiantly in India and Punjab, he sought refuge in the wilderness of his mind, intent upon awarding the benefit of his prestige only if

4. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Note Books*. Their selected portions were published in the Italian during the fifties of the last century. In the seventies, their complete version appeared, which led to their selected portions and then their complete version to appear in English and other languages of Europe. Their selected portions have appeared in many languages of the world. In several Indian languages, including Punjabi, some portions of them have been published. The insights, elaborated in them are of crucial importance for unraveling complexities in the fields of politics, culture, philosophy, language and religion.

he was given the right to chalk out a policy and forge a decision. Bereft of the eulogy that had, so opulently come his way the in USA, he must have felt extremely lonely, hapless and helpless. Practising meditation could also not have helped, which, earlier, he had recourse to under very unsavoury circumstances.

After staying in Germany for some time, he went to Turkey to judge whether revolt could be fomented with help provided by the votaries of Pan-Islamism. There also, he had to encounter reality grossly unpalatable to his cultural and religious perception. He felt that the adventure to liberate the Indian subcontinent under the command of Pan-Islamism, then being organized by Germany and Turkey could only throw the frying pan into the fire. After returning from there in disgust, he penned down his impressions of Germany and Turkey. They were meant to show how uncouth and insensitive, the residents of both the countries were and why it was unreasonable to expect any support from that crudely authoritarian quarter for the cause of India's freedom. About his stay, he wrote a very polemical account entitled '*Forty Four Months in Germany and Turkey*'.⁵ In this, he opined that the polity in both the countries was opposed to all norms of democracy and freedom. No genuine help could come from either for freeing the subcontinent from the British imperialism. In case, the subcontinent happened to get rid of British imperialism with help from Germany and Turkey, it would be hurled into a dilemma of the worse kind. That would be not freedom, for which so much sacrifice was on the anvil. Nevertheless, he forgot that some time before, he had written an article, *The Orient and German Culture*⁶, holding that salvation of the world lay only in imbibing the teachings of the great German writers and thinkers like Goethe and Schiller.

At this juncture, he dropped all the views expressed in that article. Not that there was no substance in the previous article. In fact, there was a lot in that, which presented in letters of such persons, edited by Walter Benjamin as *German Men and Women*⁷ later on encouraged the well-meaning German exiles to withstand the onslaught of Nazism. However, the situational, rather than contextual perception led Har Dayal to hold that it was in the best interest of the Indian subcontinent to enter into a commonwealth type of arrangement with England. Only such

5. Har Dayal, *Forty Four Months in Germany and Turkey* (1920) Internet.

6. Har Dayal, *The Orient and German Culture*. This article, in appreciation of German literature and thought, Lala Har Dayal wrote after arriving in Germany in 1915 from the USA, where he apprehended arrest. To his mind, it could lead to his deportation and persecution by the British authorities. Subsequently, he wrote *Forty Four Months in Germany and Turkey* that sought to indict the host country in severe terms. Comparison and contrast between the two articles shows how he was motivated to write his personal situation, rather than historical context-in mind.

7. Walter Benjamin; *German Men and Women*. Selected and edited by Walter Benjamin, the great German literary critic and thinker, these letters, ranging from those of such celebrities as Goethe and Holderlin to those of less known men and women cherished democratic values at great risk to their lives. The Nazi regime found them so dangerous that their publication was banned. Nevertheless, they provided great solace to those who defied the Nazi regime and went into exile at great risk to their lives.

arrangement could assure sovereignty of the subcontinent as safeguarded by the British suzerainty. If in *The Problem of Education*, he had pleaded for snapping all contacts with the colonial rule, be they in the field of economy, politics, education, language and religion, now he found the security and prosperity of India to lie in multiple association with England. Another view that he presented in civilizational terms though was outrageous for being contaminated with communalism of the grossest kind. It was that the north-western parts of India needed be free from the Muslim multitude. He had the feeling that the Muslim population would be the natural allies of the German-Turkish advance into India and under the garb of national independence, the Indian civilization, continuing from the ancient times would be in jeopardy. Almost two decades before the subcontinent got bifurcated into Bharat and Pakistan, he talked of something similar but politically retrograde in terms of the past, present and future.

So to stay in Germany could not be on Har Dayal's agenda. There was no option for him left but to seek refuge in Switzerland. Having done so, he reconciled himself to the continuation of the British rule. This was a retreat, which under trying circumstances, was likely to befall an intellectual of his orientation. Born to prosper as a traditional intellectual, advocating gradual change in human civilization, he had chosen to figure as a political leader aspiring for the national freedom of his motherland and revolutionary change in life, ranging from the individual to the civilizational levels. Having figured so for a short while, he recoiled back to end up as traditional intellectual, sadly enough not distinctly of the progressive but ambiguously of the retrograde sort. The fact that from then onward he had no fear of arrest was enough of a consolation for him. He could henceforth devote himself to academic work and earn Ph.D. for his study of the Bodhisattva from a university in England. Later on, it got published as *Bodhisattva Doctrines in Buddhist and Sanskrit Literatures* in book-form.⁸ He also brought out a book, *Hints for Self-Culture*, laden with overwhelming scholarship of the academic nature.

The Bodhisattva Doctrines in Buddhist and Sanskrit Literatures comprises seven chapters marked by erudite thinking and lucid expression. Herein Buddhist philosophy is elaborated not in monolithic but multifarious terms. Its interaction with the Greek, Christian and Persian thought is traced with great circumspection. How its principles and practices can rejuvenate contemporary life is also underlined in a pragmatic way, without recourse to idealism of the obvious sort. How in the course of his own life, Gautum Budha emancipated himself through spiritual exercises is cogently described. That this was Har Dayal's own cherished wish in life was a feeling that seems to have impelled him to write this haunting chapter. Its etymon comes to connote the tireless effort to divert a ascetic introvert into an idealistic extrovert. In *Hints for Self-Culture*⁹, he delineated with amazing lucidity,

8. Har Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrines in Buddhist and Sanskrit Literatures* (1970), Munshiram, Banarsidas Publishers. New Delhi, India.

9. Har Dayal, *Hints for Self Culture* (1934) Hy SL Polak&Co. London, reprint by JaicoPublishing House, New Delhi, India.

the significance of the four folds of human culture i. e. physical, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual. The diversity of sources, from which references and quotations are integrated into the fabric of his argument, is amazing. In spite of this, the book makes a very ardent reading, which is so evident from its popularity with the reading public. He sought to emphasize that by inculcating self-culture of this sort, a human being could aspire for universal citizenship.

Apparently, the wheel of Har Dayal's career went full circle in the reverse order. Almost two decades back, he had denounced the privilege of doing higher research in a renowned British university. In spite of the indigence he had in store, he had the moral courage to return the money, received as scholarship. Now he had to depend so much on the British who still held India as a colony. However, latent levels of this reversion can also not be ignored. The fact that all his life, he lived in penury like an ascetic, had no money beyond what he earned by delivering lectures and left no bank balance after his demise, were evidences enough to show that he was disposed to excel himself as a traditional intellectual. Had he reconciled himself to this dispensation from the very beginning, like Indian scholars of great repute, he could have achieved a lot. Despising the sobriety that enabled them to chalk out niches for them selves in India and abroad, he opted for a role that had enthusiasm as its core. So he sought to play the role of political leader of historic proportions. Multiple factors so overwhelmed him that he fled away after initial involvement. In her cogently written biography, *Har Dayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist*, Emily C. Brown called him a "Quixotic dreamer",¹⁰ indeed a very apt definition of his personality, thought and character. Such must have been the realization his associates like Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna (1870-1968), the president and Bhai Santokh Singh (1893-1927), the general Secretary in his place, formed about him. Significantly enough, none of them said a word against him and their reticence on this score was worthy of veneration. They must have valued his association with them far more than his departure, which was not perhaps without their consent.

Related to it is the issue whether Har Dayal came to assume the leadership of the Ghadar Party on his own volition or he was coaxed into it by certain quarters, bent upon utilizing the fantasy overflowing it for a purpose other than India's independence from the colonial rule. No doubt, his academic brilliance, ascetic living and rhetorical expression and communication had won him admiration from diverse quarters. Lala Lajpat Rai, attached to Arya Samaj but a genuine patriot, encouraged him to play greater role on the political stage. In London, he got close to Veer Savarkar (1883-1966) then known for his patriotic zeal though later on, he got amnesty from life-imprisonment and after independence became the chief ideologue of Jan Sangh, to rate Hindu communalism over all other contending considerations. However, he was closest to Bhai Parmanand (1876-1947), who was proud of the fact that he descended from Bhai Mati Das (?-1675), a disciple of Guru Teg Bahadur (1621-1675), martyred with him by the Mughal authorities. His closeness to Puran Singh, the great visionary Sikh, was also known to all.¹¹ Surely,

10. Emily C. Brown, *Har Dayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist* (1975) Arizona Press, USA.

11. *Puran Singh : Jeevani te Kavita* (1962), Bharati Sahit Academy, New Delhi.

all these factors must have converged to encourage him to assume the leadership of the Ghadar Party. No single factor could have provided him the impulse to take this risk that in the first instance jeopardized his academic career and then earned him so much glory. When he marked a retreat that earned him isolation, which was quite the opposite of solitude he could have cherished.

Was there no other person capable enough, to articulate the agenda of the Ghadar Party in ideological terms, with eloquence so as to sound convincing to the widening circle of the people and direct them to devise strategy capable of defeating the tactic of the bloc native and foreign elite had formed to keep the colonial system intact from subversion and defeat? At the historical conjuncture when the Ghadarites landed in Punjab to cause the uprising, there was none amongst them who could have executed this task. Most promising of them was Kartar Singh Sarabha (1896-1915), who was too young to assume this task though the courage that led him to the gallows, established him as an iconic martyr to be followed by others, most notably by Bhagat Singh. Bhai Santokh Singh was to show this promise later after the failure of the Ghadarites and their execution and imprisonment. The promise he showed by forming the Kirti-Kisan Party and starting the *Kirti* journal, withered with his untimely death at the age of thirty four only. Both of them had held Har Dayal in deep regard when he was in America to award presence to the cause they had made visible. Sarabha was known to have translated his erudite articles into Punjabi for publication in *Ghadar*. He forgot all about Har Dayal and about Sarabha, which can somewhat explain the contrast, meted to them by historical memory. Rejuvenated from oblivion, Kartar Singh Sarabha and Bhai Santokh Singh are getting close to our hearts, more so with the passage of time. This is because of the integrity and authenticity, which they never renounced. As an idol, deserving pity and wonder, Har Dayal is receding into mist of the past, from where he deserves to be retrieved for the brilliance he showed at a very crucial historical juncture. His retreat deserves to be taken with understanding, along with the consideration for his two books, which he wrote with all overweening lucidity of the academic sort.

To put it in a nutshell, the crux of his whole life and thought is that after his retreat Har Dayal sought adjustment with the democratic system prevailing in the Anglo-French and the American world. It was not that the system seemed faultless to him. He did find faults in the system, which he believed could be removed by secondary changes to be wrought through human rights organizations etc. Likewise, he identified inadequacies in the human civilization. To obliterate them, the advocacy of Esperanto was essential. Last of all was his insistence on awarding present meaning to scriptures of the past, as evident from his book on Bodhisattva Doctrines. If in doing so, he laid stress upon the theoretical aspects and not on historical changes, it was in keeping with the retreat he had marked from revolt against the British colonialism. In his heart of hearts, he, perhaps, never recovered from its shock. Whatever he, later on, achieved and aspired, as a writer and thinker, was a shock-therapy in the varied sense of the word.

THE ROLE OF LALA HARDAYAL IN THE GHADAR MOVEMENT

Raj Kumar*

Lala Hardayal was a revolutionary and a scholar who dedicated himself to the cause of freedom of India. He travelled to many parts of the world to spread his message. He had a unique devotion to the cause of India and humanity. His name was familiar to every educated Indian during the early twentieth century. His life was an example of Indian experiments with revolutionary techniques and ideologies in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Lala Hardayal was born in Delhi in 1884 in a lower middle class Kayastha family¹ in Cheera Khanna [Delhi] which lies at the back of Gurdwara Sisganj.² When Hardayal was born, the administration of Delhi was part of the Punjab. The colleges of Delhi were also affiliated to the Panjab University, Lahore. Delhi was made capital of India on December 12, 1911. So Lala Hardayal was considered a native of the Punjab.³

Hardayal was sent to Cambridge Mission School, Delhi at the age of four and did his matriculation at an early age of fourteen.⁴ He completed his Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Stephen's College, Delhi.⁵ Later he took his M.A. degree in English Literature from Government College, Lahore.⁶ Hardayal possessed phenomenal memory and broke many University examination records. He came to be known as the Great Hardayal.⁷

Hardayal was selected for state scholarship granted by the Government of India to promising young Indian scholars. They were expected to join government service after they had completed their education in England. Hardayal was the first Punjabi or North Indian to be awarded this scholarship.⁸ So, he joined St.

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1. Kayastha is an Intermediate Caste, *Encyclopaedia of the Indian Biography*, ed., Narinder Kr. Singh, vol. III, A.P.H. Publications, New Delhi, 2000, p. 479; See also Emily C. Brown, *Hardayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1976, p. 12.
2. The Gurdwara was built on the place, where Guru Teg Bahadur and Bhai Matidas were decapitated: Dharam Vira, ed., *Letters of Lala Hardayal*, Indian Book Agency, Ambala Cantt., 1970, p. 10.
3. Navarattan Kapur, *Dr. Hardayal: A Practical Intellectual and Diplomat*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988, p. 5.
4. Desh Raj Kali, "Lala Hardayal (Ghadri)", *Mela Ghadri Babean Da*, Souvenir, Jalandhar, n.d., pp. 8-9.
5. Emily C. Brown, *Hardayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist*, p. 13.
6. *Encyclopaedia of the Indian Biography*, pp. 479-80.
7. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs (1839-1974)*, vol. 2, Oxford, Delhi, 1966, pp. 154-55.
8. Emily C. Brown, *Hardayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist*, p. 14.

John College, Oxford in September 1905⁹. At St. John's College, he soon earned reputation for his high character, simplicity, nobility and intellectual bent of mind.¹⁰ In England, he started visiting the India House. It had been established by Shymji Krishnajiwarma, with the aim of spreading revolutionary propaganda among the students. Shyamji also edited the *Indian Sociologist*. In India House, Hardayal met Savarkar, Virendranath Chattopadya and other young revolutionaries.¹¹ As soon as he became convinced that the rule of British over India was immoral he decided to sever all relations with government.¹² Hardayal had the ambition to take I.C.S. examination, but dropped the idea and plunged into the struggle for the freedom of India.¹³ Commenting on his intellect, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote in *Young India* that it is needless to say that even in England he maintained his reputation for brilliant scholarship, but what is remarkable is that it was here that he became a nationalist".¹⁴

Deportation of Sardar Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai produced a great stir in the mind of Hardayal. He considered it a sin to accept the state scholarship and gave up his scholarship at the end of 1907.¹⁵ He left his academic career in 1907 and turned to revolutionary activities.¹⁶

He came back to India in 1908.¹⁷ He lived for some time with Lala Lajpat Rai in Lahore and organised a class of young men, to whom he preached the value of passive resistance and boycott as weapons for striving the British out of India.¹⁸ Early in 1911, he went to United States. After a short stay in Boston he proceeded to Berkeley, California.¹⁹ His reputation as a scholar had already preceded him. In January 1912, he was invited to join the faculty of Stanford University as a lecturer in Philosophy.²⁰ It was here at Stanford University he got in touch with various socialist and anarchist groups. Soon, he came to be known as a great intellectual exponent of the philosophy of anarchism in San Francisco.²¹ He believed in

9. Dharm Vira, "Dr. Hardayal", N.B. Sen [ed.], *Punjab's Eminent Hindus*, New Book Society, Lahore, 1944, p. 126.
10. Dharm Vira (ed.), *Letters of Lala Hardayal*, Indian Book Agency, Ambala Cantt., 1970, p. 13.
11. P.C. Joshi, "Lala Hardayal : A Biographical Note and a Note on his Karl Marx", K. Damodaran, *Marx comes to India*, Manohar, New Delhi, pp. 24-25.
12. Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. III, Publication Division, Delhi, 1972, p. 443.
13. Fauja Singh, *Who's Who : Punjab Freedom Fighters*, vol. I, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 77.
14. Lala Lajpat Rai, *Young India*, Publishing Division, Delhi, 1976, pp. 165-166.
15. Dharam Vira, *Letters of Lala Hardayal*, p. 15.
16. Khushwant Singh and Satinder Singh, *Ghadar 1915 : India's First Armed Revolution*, p. 16.
17. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India As I Knew It, 1885-1925*, Constable and Company, London, 1925, p. 185.
18. *The National Movement (1885-1940)*, Ghadar Party Collection 8, pp. 73-81.
19. Home Department, Political A, *Proceedings*, July 1913, Nos. 4-6, *History Sheet of Hardayal*, pp. 2-3.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
21. Chienchiah, "The Ghadar Party : Reminiscences", *Heritage Bulletin*, no. 3, Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Library, Jalandhar, July 23, 1996, pp. 1-18.

revolution, not only in India but revolution everywhere.²² He used to say, "I am revolutionist first and everything else afterwards."²³

The major event which revived Hardayal's revolutionary spirit was the attempt made in Delhi on the life of the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge on December 23, 1912. Hardayal was tremendously excited with joy.²⁴ This event excited his imagination and roused the dormant Indian revolutionary in him. This led Hardayal to think that the political movement in Hindustan was still alive.²⁵ He published a virulently anarchist pamphlet written in Urdu entitled, *Shabash* (well Done ! or Bravo) in commemoration of the bomb attack on Hardinge. The translation of *Shabash* has been made by an official of the Foreign Department of the Government of India.²⁶ He worked for eight months at Stanford and after that he devoted himself full time in 1913 to building a revolutionary organization.

Around the time when Lala Hardayal was at the University of Stanford in California, a large number of Indian immigrants working in Oregon, California and Washington had already been organising associations in America for the redressal of their grievances. They were those Punjabis who had left Punjab under economic duress. Economic conditions had worsened during the first decade of the twentieth century. The worsening economic conditions became responsible for the migration of thousands of Punjabis, mostly from the peasant families to foreign lands to earn their livelihood.²⁷ Over 75 percent of them were Sikhs, of these around fifty percent were ex-soldiers who had served in the British army.²⁸ These Punjabi emigrants mostly settled down in America and Canada. Within few years of their arrival, Punjabi became the cynosure of American and Canadian eyes.²⁹

Meanwhile, radical nationalist propaganda led by a few Indian revolutionaries which was directed against British rule in India had introduced a new element which contributed to the rise of political consciousness among the immigrants.³⁰ New leaders came to force particularly in California. Among them were Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Bhai Harnam Singh Tundilat, Bhai Udham Singh and Bhai

22. John W. Spellman : The International Extension of Political Conspiracy as Illustrated by the Ghadar Party, *Journal of Indian History*, xxxvii, April, 1959, p.26.

23. Desh Raj Kali, "Lala Har Dayal (Ghadri)", *Mela Ghadri Babean Da*, Souvenir, Jalandhar, n.d. pp. 8-9.

24. Puri, *The Ghadar Movement*, p. 66.

25. Dharam Vira, "Dr Hardayal", *Punjab's Eminent Hindus*, p. 138.

26. Home Department, Political A, June 1914, *Proceedings*, Nos. 70-75, proscription under section 19 of Sea Custom Act 1878 (VIII of 1878) of an Urdu Pamphlet called '*Shabash*' published by the "Yugantar Ashram" of San Francisco, U.S.A. Headquarters of Hardayal's revolutionary activities.

27. Prem Singh, "The Ghadar uprising in Historical context", *Heritage Bulletin*, no. 3, Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Committee, Jalandhar, July 23, 1996, pp. 33-34; See also, Master Hari Singh, *Punjab Peasant in Freedom Struggle*, Vol. II, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984, p. 32.

28. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, p. 16.

29. Khushwant Singh and Satinder Singh, *Ghadar 1915 : India's First Armed Revolution*, R & K. Publishing, New Delhi, 1966, p. 3.

30. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, p. 41.

Farmer Singh etc. All of them were working in lumber mills. They used to assemble every Sunday and hold discussions on social and political matters. Gradually many societies were established in various parts of U.S.A., where Indians had settled in large numbers, but there was no worthwhile political organization among the Indians.

In the beginning of 1912, a meeting was held at Portland (Oregon) which was attended by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Bhai Udham Singh, Bhai Harnam Singh and Pandit Kashi Ram etc. In this meeting, an organization called 'The Hindustani Association' was formed whose office was set up in Portland. Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna was elected its President, Shri G.D. Kumar and Pandit Kashi Ram were elected General Secretary and Treasurer respectively. It was decided that a weekly *The India* should be published.

In the beginning of 1913, Shri G.D. Kumar fell ill. Due to his illness, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna proposed that Ajit Singh should be invited and entrusted the responsibilities of organization to him.³¹ During those days Lala Thakur Das came to Portland (Oregon) and advised Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna and Pandit Kashi Ram to send for Lala Hardayal from California and to entrust the work of the association to him. In a meeting held at Portland this advice of Lala Thakur Das was accepted.³² Lala Hardayal agreed but could not join until the last week of March 1913. He came to St. John (Oregon) on 25 March 1913 along with Bhai Parmanand of Lahore.³³ His speech in the meeting was that you will never be treated as equals by the Americans until you are free in your own land. The root cause of Indian poverty and degradation is British rule and it must be overthrown, not by petitions but by armed revolt.³⁴

A meeting of Indian leaders in the U.S.A. was summoned at Astoria in April 1913. This was the most important meeting as it laid the foundation of the Ghadar Party. While addressing the meeting, he said, "you have come to America and seen with your own eyes the prosperity of this country. Nothing more than this that America is ruled by its own people".³⁵ He threw light on the theory of economic exploitation of India by the British.³⁶ In this meeting, Hardayal also suggested that the name of the association should be 'Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast'. Later it came to be known as Ghadar Party as the word Ghadar Party was used in the first issue of the *Ghadar Paper*.³⁷

31. Kuldeep Kaur, *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna: Life and Works of the Founder of the Ghadar Party (1870-1968)*, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2010, p. 11.

32. Gurdev Singh Deol, *The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement*, Sterling, 1969, p. 57.

33. Ibid., p.58.

34. Bipin Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence*, Penguin Books, London, 1989, p. 149.

35. A.C. Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad 1905-1922*, Bharti Bhawan, Patna, 1921, p.58.

36. L.P. Mathur, *Indian Revolutionary Movements in the United States of America*, S. Chand, Delhi, 1970, p.25.

37. Anil Baran Ganguly, *Ghadar Revolution in America*, Metropolitan Book Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1980, p.15.

Sohan Singh Bhakna, was choosen as the first President, Jwala Singh and Keshar Singh as Vice-Presidents, Lala Hardayal as General Secretary of the Party. It was also decided that office of the party would be in San Francisco and should be named 'Yugantar Ashram'.³⁸

In Astoria meeting it was also decided to start a weekly paper, the *Ghadar* from Yugantar Ashram. It was also decided to entrust the publication of the paper to Lala Hardayal.³⁹ Hardayal wanted to choose such a name for the journal that could be immediately understood by the Punjabi and the Hindi speaking people. So, he decided the name *The Ghadar* (Rebellion).⁴⁰ *Ghadar* began publishing in 1913. The first issue of the *Ghadar* was published in Urdu on November 1, 1913 with Lala Hardayal as editor, from 5 Wood Street, San Francisco. In December, an edition was brought out in Gurumukhi.⁴¹ The objective of starting the paper was made clear at the outset. It said "Our name and work are identical : An armed revolution was to be started in India, because the people could no longer bear the tyranny and oppression under British Rule".⁴² The *Ghadar* soon came to be published in many Indian languages. It was published in English, Urdu, Hindi, Gujrati, Bengali, Marathi, etc. The coming out of the *Ghadar* paper was a big event in the history of the freedom movement of India. It was clarion call for revolution. It was a revolutionary paper which brought out a revolutionary change among the Indian immigrants, comment S.S. Josh.⁴³ The circulation of the *Ghadar* newspaper rapidly expanded and a large number of papers were posted weekly to India from San Francisco. Copies were also sent to Japan, Hongkong, Shanghai, South and East Africa and in fact, to every place where Indians were known to be residing.⁴⁴ Special features of the *Ghadar* were the patriotic poems. These enkindled a fire in the hearts of those who read them. The dominant theme was to take up the Sword to kill the British rulers and rise up for the *Ghadar* (rebellion).⁴⁵

Ghadar paper played a very important role in the Ghadar movement. It was the pivot of all the activities of the Ghadar Party.⁴⁶ Lala Hardayal managed to run the paper very well. His method of exposing British imperialism was excellent.⁴⁷ He was the chief 'man of words' of the Ghadar movement. His leading ideas which the Ghadar disseminated were very much like those of the founding fathers

38. A.C. Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad 1905-1922*, Bharti Bhawan, Patna, 1921, p.58.

39. L.P. Mathur, *Indian Revolutionary Movements in the United States of America*, S. Chand, Delhi, 1970, p.24.

40. Dharamvira, *Lala Hardayal and Revolutionary Movements of His Times*, pp. 187-188.

41. F.C. Isemonger and J. Slattery, *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy (1913-1915)*, Archana Publication, Lahore, 1919, p.13.

42. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, p.68.

43. Josh, *Hindustan Ghadar Party*, p. 163.

44. Isemonger and Slattery, *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy (1913-1915)*, p.20.

45. Dharamvira, *Lala Hardayal and Revolutionary Movements of His Times*, pp. 198; See also Josh, *Hindustan Ghadar Party*, p. 476.

46. Deol, *The Role of Ghadar Party in the National Movement*, p.74.

47. Sohan Singh Josh, *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna: Life of the Founder of the Ghadar Party*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1970, p.35.

of the United States of America.⁴⁸

The history of Ghadar Party could never have been completed without the revolutionary ideas of Lala Hardayal.⁴⁹ He regularly contributed to the *Ghadar* paper. He in his writings in the *Ghadar* weekly declared that his primary objective was the end of the British colonial rule in India through an armed mass struggle.⁵⁰

In the first issue of paper he had stated that the time will soon come when rifles and blood will take the place of pen and ink.⁵¹ He wrote "All citizens must have full liberty of speech, assembly, association, discussion, printing and criticism. Only the free man and woman can walk erect and speak the truth, and rise to the full stature of humanity".⁵² Through his writings, he made the readers aware of the fact that the root cause of their poverty, degradation and all other woes was their subjection to the British rule. Therefore the major objective before them should be the overthrow of the government and the objective cannot be achieved by the petitions.⁵³ Britishers had ruined the country's economy and demoralized the people. Thousands had to leave their country in search of livelihood. In foreign lands they were hated and ridiculed. This was mainly because they were "slaves" of the British.⁵⁴ He further wrote, "India is one of the richest countries of the world, but its people at present are very poor".⁵⁵ The chief cause of the poverty of the people is the selfish and short-sighted policy of the British government. Peasants pay the tax to the provinces, the government officials, the landlord, the village usurer and at the end, little is left for his own family.⁵⁶ He also wrote that political subjection of India into the hands of foreigners is a shame. Even if a European farmer and labourer know nothing else about India, he knows that India is ruled by the English.⁵⁷

Hardayal's views on educational system of British government in India are also very relevant for understanding the mind around this time. In India, he said, "Education is conspicuous by its absence. There is very little popular education. Four villages out of five are without a school. After hundred years of British control only ten per cent of the people can read and write."⁵⁸ The British established schools and colleges in India in order to consolidate their empire and weaken our

48. Puri, *The Ghadar Movement*, pp. 104-105; See also Gobind Bihari Lal, *The Ghadar : Thoughts Presented*, Berkeley, Rare Documents, Accession No. 11201, Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Library, Jalandhar, 1973, p.4.

49. N.K. Joshi, *Heritage Bulletin*, Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Committee, Jalandhar, July 23, 1996, p.17.

50. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, p.115.

51. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs, 1839-1974*, vol. II, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, p.177.

52. Lala Hardayal, *Hints for Self Culture*, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1961, p.314.

53. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, p.106.

54. Harish K. Puri, "Revolutionary Organization : A Study of the Ghadar Movement", *Social Scientist*, Nos. 98-99 (September-October 1980), pp. 53-66.

55. Dharamvira, *Lala Hardayal and Revolutionary Movements of His Times*, p. 157.

56. Hardayal (x.y.z.), "The Indian Peasant", *Modern Review*, XIII : 5 May, 1913, pp. 506-09.

57. Hardayal, "The Shame of India", *Modern Review*, XL:3 September 1926, p.245.

58. Hardayal, "Education in India", *Bulletin*, San Francisco, June 19, 1912, p.11.

institutions and polity. British educational system presents two great evils—denationalization and demoralization.⁵⁹ He suggested Indians to take higher education in countries like France, Germany and Switzerland. He put forward his argument by saying that education is cheaper in these countries than England.⁶⁰

He worked for five and a half months for the Ghadar Party and the *Ghadar* Paper. His hard work created so much consciousness among Punjabis that they themselves became capable enough to run and handle their work. Sohan Singh Bhakna greatly admired his intelligence, consciousness and capability in his memories.⁶¹

The British government was getting regular reports of the activities of the Ghadar Party. The revolutionary awakening among Indians panicked the British rulers. They thought that the real man behind this revolutionary upsurge was Hardayal.⁶² Arrest warrants were issued against him. He was arrested by U.S. authorities on 25 March 1914. The news of Lala Hardayal's arrest spread like wild fire. He got bail on next day.⁶³ Lala Hardayal explained that his arrest was not in connection with his work on the *Ghadar*. It was on account of a speech which he had delivered a few years ago, on arrival in America.⁶⁴ However, Sohan Singh Bhakna decided that Lalaji should be sent outside America and beyond the reach of the British and his security be allowed to be forfeited.⁶⁵

Lala Hardayal left America in March 1914. After him, the activities of the Ghadar Party were directed by Ram Chandra Peshawari. Hardayal, before his departure had already informed the members of the Party that the Germany was getting ready for war with England and that it was time for the Indians in America to return home for the revolution.⁶⁶

Hardayal arrived in Berlin in 1915 accompanied by Champak Raman Pillai.⁶⁷ At the outbreak of First World War, Indian Independence Committee was founded in Berlin in the middle of 1915 of which Lala Hardayal and Sh. B.N. Chattopadhyay were its leading figures.⁶⁸ Later on the committee was named as India Independence committee and all its members were Indians. Hardayal was the head of the Committee.⁶⁹ Other important members of the committee were Chakravathy,

59. Lala Hardayal, *Our Educational Problem*, Tagore Co., Madras, 1922, pp.63-75.

60. Hardayal, "Education in the West: A Suggestion", *Modern Review*, XI:2, February 1912, pp. 141-42.

61. Josh, *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna*, p.36.

62. Josh, *Hindustan Ghadar Party*, p. 178.

63. Tundilat, "*Ghadar Party-personal Memoir*", p.19.

64. Tundilat, "*Ghadar Party-personal Memoir*", p.20.

65. Josh, *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna*, p.36.

66. T.R. Sareen, *Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad 1905-1921*, Sterling, New Delhi, 1975, p.95.

67. Anil Baran Ganguly, *Ghadar Revolution in America*, Metropolitan, New Delhi, 1980, p.57.

68. M.S. Sharma, *Lala Hardayal: At a Glance*, Lala Hardayal Centenary Celebration Committee, Jalandhar, 1984, p.1.

69. *Indian Revolutionary Committee Berlin: Activities in the First World War (1914-1918)*, Ghadar Related Matter, Accession No. 11276, Rare Documents, Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Library, Jalandhar, p.6; See also K.P. Bahadur, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. II, ESS ESS Publications, New Delhi, 1987, p. 20.

Pillai, Barkatullah and Narayan Marathe. The Committee worked under the German Staff. Lala Hardayal and Chattopadhyaya met their officers in Berlin everyday.⁷⁰ According to H.K. Puri, Hardayal was persuaded to join the Berlin Committee mainly because of his reputation as a leader of the Ghadar Party.⁷¹ The aim of the committee was to train a selected number of men in the manufacture and use of explosives and modern weapons and then to send them by various routes to arm and train revolutionaries in India.⁷² Other works of the Berlin committee consisted of printing and distributing anti-British literature, and preaching sedition to Indian prisoners in Germany. Members of Berlin Committee received various duties and dispatched papers to various parts of the world to gain support from other countries and to start new branches of the Ghadar Party.⁷³ The Berlin committee sent men and money to India with instruction to inform the leaders of revolutionary groups that help would be forthcoming from Germany in the form of weapons and that they should organize themselves and prepare plans.⁷⁴ Berlin committee was an absolutely autonomous body in regular receipt of specified monthly amount and occasional grants from the German Foreign Office.⁷⁵

During the later part of the Great War, German saw no chance of success. They began to treat Indians indifferently. Some of the Indians themselves were jealous of each other. Lala Hardayal could not tolerate this. He decided to leave Germany.⁷⁶ This disillusionment of Hardayal with the Germans must have influenced the deliberations of many Indian revolutionaries who later on decided to forsake it as a weapon of struggle.⁷⁷ He expressed his disillusionment with the Germans in 1919 by publicly declaring, "Imperialism is always an evil, but British and French imperialism in its worst form is thousand times preferable to German or Japanese imperialism."⁷⁸ After 1919, this great rebel leader lived an obscure life and died in 1939 as a pacifist, while on a lecture tour in USA.⁷⁹

Lala Hardayal played an important role in the struggle for India's independence. His name was familiar to every educated Indian during the early twentieth century. Gobind Bihari Lal, who was closely associated with Lala Hardayal used to say three R's stand for Lala Hardayal's personality. They are Renaissance (intellectual), Reformation (of social institutions), and Revolution (Political-Economic)". Hardayal was sincere man who had the courage to live according to his convictions. He was a rationalist, a modernist and an intellectual. He himself used to say that three

70. Dharamvira, "Dr. Hardayal", *Punjab's Eminent Hindus*, p.14.

71. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 2nd Edition, p.104.

72. *Indian Revolutionary Committee Berlin: Activities in First World War [1914-1918]*, p.9.

73. David Machado, *The Ghadar Party and Hindu German Conspiracy*, Manuscripts, Accession No. 11313, Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Library, Jalandhar, 1973, p.9.

74. David Machado, *The Ghadar Party and Hindu German Conspiracy*, p.9.

75. Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad 1905-1922*, pp.91-92.

76. Dharamvira, "Dr. Hardayal", *Punjab's Eminent Hindus*, p.139.

77. Mathur, *Indian Revolutionary Movement in the United States of America*, p.159.

78. *Ibid.*, p.155.

79. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Freedom Movement in India*, vol. II, Calcutta, 1963, p.411.

D's had always guided his life : Discipline, Development and Dedication.

There is no doubt that he is one of the greatest scholars India has produced. His later life is an example of his scholarship, but it is also true that in his early years, he was a great revolutionary, who guided the Ghadar movement. He revolutionized the works in America with his ideas and writings in the pages of *Ghadar* paper. It was he who had proposed the idea of weekly paper to preach revolutionary ideas among Indians in foreign countries. Main features of the ideology of Ghadar movement, which was determined by Hardayal included the armed struggle, Republic in India, Hindu-Muslim unity, no caste or colour distinction and secular polity.

He was a propagandist, an inspirer and an ideologue. He believed not only in revolution in India, but revolution everywhere. He made great sacrifices but unfortunately ended as one of the dropouts of the Indian revolution.

SOME SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF GHADAR LEHAR

S.D. Gajrani*

In Europe men like Hardayal and Parmanand worked with Shyamji Krishna Verma, Madam Cama and Veer Savarkar. It was under the influence of the latter that Madan Lal Dhingra, an engineering student from Amritsar, shot dead in July 1909, Sir William Curzon Wyllie who was responsible for the death of a number of young men and transportation for life to Ganesh Savarkar. Whereas, Madan Lal Dhingra was denounced for his (this) 'dastardly' act by leaders such as Bipin Chandra Pal, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Gokhale and others, but his fearlessness was admired by the revolutionary groups in Europe and India as well.¹ Simultaneously commenting on the role of terrorism after the incident, W.S. Blunt wrote in his diary. "People talk about political assassination as defeating its own end, but that is nonsense. It is just the shock needed to convince selfish rulers that selfishness has its limits of imprudence. It is like the other fiction that when England has her face slapped, she apologizes, not before."²

In Canada and the United States also revolutionary upsurge among the Indians was quite visible during the period 1909-15. Racial discrimination by the Ottawa Government to the *Punjabi* immigrants to Canada, the taunts and humiliation that they had to suffer in their hands and the attacks by the Canadian and American workers were attributed by these immigrants due to their being from a colonial country.³ An organization named *Ghadar* initially called 'Hindustani Association of the Pacific Coast' was established at Portland in the United States under the leadership of Sohan Singh Bhakna, with some other prominent leaders, such as Lala Hardyal, Pandit Kashiram, Bhai Parmanand, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Ram Chandra as its active members. The group decided to work for the liberation of their country i.e. India by instigating patriotic fervour among the Indian overseas and preparing them to participate in an armed revolt against the British rule.⁴

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1. Williamson, H., Communism in India - 1935 (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department : Government of India revised up to 1935), 271; Home Department File No. 233/ II/1936, 26; 261 (Also see Section II of this thesis).
2. *Meerut Conspiracy Case Sessions Judgement*, 1930, Vol.I, Pt. XXIX, 594, NAI, New Delhi; *Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers*: Sr. No.167, Exhibit No. p.344 (T), 771-Aims & Objects and Rules and Regulations of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party; Also Sr. No.19, Vol.XIV, Joint Statement of Nimbkar, A.S. and Others, 4892.
3. *Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers*, Sr. No.167, Exhibit No. p.344(T), 771; also Sr. No.161, Exhibit No.549(15), 922-26; *The Bulletin* (San Francisco), October 20, 1913, Quoted in Brown, Emily C., *Hardayal : Hindu Revolutionary and Nationalist*, New Delhi, 1976, p. 142.
4. Joint Statement of Nimbkar and others, 5415, Latala, Kartar Singh, '*Kirti-di-Unati-de-Sadhan*', published in the *Kirti* (Amritsar), September : 1927, 27; also quoted in Brown, Emily C., *Hardayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Nationalist*, New Delhi, 1976, pp. 160-61.

Elaborate plans were made for guerilla warfare in India with the liberation of the mountainous part of Kashmir and NWFP as the first step. The revolutionary ideas generated by *Ghadar* organization/movement had spread like wild fire among the Indian residents in USA and other foreign countries. The *Punjabi* workers in USA were soon drawn to its fold. The outbreak of First World War (1914) changed the situation with its impact on the plans of the revolutionaries.⁵

Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna was President and Lala Hardayal Secretary of the Ghadar party. While the *Kamagata Maru* (ship) was returning to India, Sohan Singh Bhakna followed it to contact the passengers of this ship. He succeeded in doing so in Japan. He exhorted them to get ready for a revolution against the British rule; their policy of imperialism and colonialism in India; the *Ghadarites* had planned to begin in the Punjab. He told them that the decision had been taken soon after *Kamagata Maru* had started its return journey to India from Canada. The World War-I had begun and *Gadharites* had decided and were determined to strike at the British when it was engaged in a titanic conflict against the Germans.

Sohan Singh Bhakna was not the only *Gadhrite* who was then on his way to India to bring about the anti-British revolution. Hundred of the other *Gadhrites* had also boarded different ships under fictitious names to execute the decision taken by the organization to which they had the honour of owing allegiance. Among the *Gadharites* on their way to India was the youthful Kartar Singh Sarabha. A good number of these *Gadharites* including Sohan Singh Bhakna were hauled up by the vigilant British on their landing in India; they were arrested and put behind the bars. A few activists including Sarabha, however, escaped the clutches of the Indian police. In pursuance of the resolution to create a revolutionary upsurge in India, they first sought to work up the Punjab peasantry, given to gathering in annual *melas* at numerous places in the Punjab. Possibly, because the discontent against the British in the Punjab in the first few months after the declaration of the war was absent due to large scale recruitment being done by the British of the Punjab village folk in the army.

However, this strategy of the *Gadhrites* did not work. They changed their tactics and started creating discontent against the British rule among the Indian soldiers stationed in various cantonments located in the Land of the Five Rivers. In the confident hope that they would not fail in working up their brethren in the army against the British, they even fixed the date for a simultaneous rising all over the Punjab. The plan, however, failed and the *Gadhrites* were arrested in large numbers. Some of them were hanged after a series of secret trials in Lahore, Mandi and other jails. The foremost among them was Kartar Singh Sarabha. He became the ideal of the revolutionaries of the late twentieth century of the India's fight for freedom. Several others were sentenced to life imprisonment and dispatched to Andaman-Nicobar islands. It would be worth underlining the fact that this

5. Emily C., op.cit., p. 146 (For details see the *Ghadr* of November 29, 1918); Joint Statement of Nimbkar, R.S. and Others.

happened in the first two years of the World War-I (1914-16) when almost nothing in the nature of a freedom struggle was being waged anywhere else in India.

The *Kamagata Maru* incident too had its effect on the *Ghadarites*; they utilized the opportunity to direct the anti-Canadian Government feelings into anti-British ferment. By relating their humiliations to the colonized status of India, they eminently succeeded in converting many of the passengers of this merchant ship into militant fighters for the country's liberation.⁶ This incident also gave impetus to the anti-British struggle currently being waged in Canada, USA and South-East Asian islands and further convinced them about the importance of Indian independence.⁷

On the outbreak of the World War-I, the *Ghadarites* decided to return to India and organize revolt. They wanted to take advantage of the critical period when the British armies were engaged in crucial battles on various fronts in Europe and Asia. Addressing the immigrants on board the ship, Ram Chandra, a leading member of the *Ghadar* party, who stayed back in USA to combine *Ghadar* activities, said:⁸

“Your duty is clear, Go to India, Stir up rebellion in every corner of the country. Rob the wealthy and show mercy to the poor. In this way gain universal sympathy. Arms will be provided for on arrival in India. Failing this you must ransack police stations for rifles. Obey without hesitation the command of your leaders”.

Many of the *Ghadarites* travelled back to India on the *Kamagata Maru* and *Tosa Maru* ships, but on account of vigilance of the British Intelligence Service and quick action taken by the authorities, 400 out of the 8000 passengers who returned during the first two years of the war, were arrested. 2500 were interned in their villages and remaining 5100 were kept under strict watch. Those who escaped from the clutches of law, however tried to carry out their plan like working among the peasantry, seduction of the army, procurement of arms, manufacture of bombs, commissioning of dacoit, looting of treasuries and Thanas, recruitment of young men for revolutionary work and distribution of *Ghadar* literature etc.⁹ Some important leaders penetrated into the army in clandestine, organized secret cells to give them the political education and incited them against the foreign

6. Bala, Shastri Hardas, *Armed Struggle for Freedom : Ninety Years of Independence*, translated by S.S. Apte, Poona Kal Prakashan: 1958,, pp. 252-53 (Hardas quotes at length from Khan Khoje's Diary which recorded the details about the *Ghadar* plan of action); *The Kirti* (Amritsar), July, 1927, pp. 13-15; also of June, 1929, 17-19.
7. *The Kirti*, April, 1929 (Mahatma Karl Marx), 7; also of May, 1929 (Comrade Karl Marx), 56-63; *The Kirti*, 'Firanghi Shahi Da Takhta Dol Giya', December, 1929, 1-2.
8. Karr, J.C., *Political Trouble in India*, 1907, (Indian reprint, Calcutta : 1973), pp. 17, 173; *The Kirti* (Amritsar), December, 1929, 1-2, *Meerut Jail Wich Dake do Kirti Aguan da Zabani Suneha*.
9. *The Kirti* (Amritsar), August, 1929, 50 (*Kirti Lehr Nahin Dabegi*) 126-27; *The Kirti* (May Day), May, 1929, 5; *The Kirti* (1914-15 de Shahidan Ton Sikhia), May, 1929, 7-8.

domination and rule.¹⁰ A number of dacoities were suspected to have been committed by the *Ghadarites* from December 1914 to February 1915. The revolutionary group distributed cyclostyled copies of the *Allan-i-Jang* among the peasantry workers and the urban youth, in large numbers. Rash Bihari Bose, who had joined these revolutionaries, took the command of this organization and fixed the night of 21 February, 1915 for a general uprising of the Indian troops. The scheme was, however, failed due to the betrayal by some members and disclosures by informers. Kartar Singh Saraba, Vishnu Pingley and many other *Ghadar* leaders were arrested; Rash Bihari Bose and some other escaped while several became approvers to save themselves. Some being subjected to third degree methods, informed the authorities all about the organization and plan of the revolt.¹¹ By August 1915 most of the *Ghadar* leaders fell into the hands of the authorities.

Special Tribunals were appointed by the Government of India under the Defence of India Act to try the *Ghadar* revolutionaries. There was no right to appeal to higher court over judgements of the Tribunals. Altogether nine batches of the revolutionaries were tried by these 'Tribunals' in what came to be known as First Lahore Conspiracy Case. In all 175 persons were put on trial. In the end 20 were hanged; 58 were transported for life or imprisoned for shorter periods.¹²

In the meantime a 'Provisional Indian Government' headed by Raja Mahendra Pratap, had been set up at Kabul with a view of stirring up rebellion in India. A Pan Islamic movement had also been started in India during this time and fifteen Muslim students left their colleges in Lahore in February 1915 and joined the *Mujahadin-a-Wahabi* sect. Some other *Punjabi* Muslims had also crossed the borders to join the holy war (*jehad*) and made common cause with the revolutionaries at Kabul.¹³ An attempt to inform about their contacts in India and also about the activities of the most of their important leaders, even before they went to work in India, when they did get to work, some of their members gave away their secrets to police.

Also the *Ghadarites* could not calculate and fix exact time to strike at the enemy. They were emotionally surcharged with their hatred against the British

10. The *Kirti*, March, 1930, 43-52; Home Department, File No.44/36-1934 - Political (Statement of Harjap Singh - A member of the *Hindustan Ghadr Party*). 4; also File No.6/10/1928, 39, NAI : New Delhi; For details also see File No.235/11/1926, 30; The *Kirti*, February, 1926, 77-78; March, 1926; July, 1926, 20; The *Kirti*, (Amritsar), '*Zamindar Sabha*', February, 1928, 77-78; The *Kirti*, March, 1930, (Brij Narain's '*Zamindar Te Kisan*'), 16-19.
11. Home Department, File No.44/26/1934, 15, 18; The *Kirti*, July, 1927, 50; The *Kirti* (Amritsar), August, 1927 (Desaunda Singh was an Indian National in China); For details see The *Kirti* (Amritsar), February, 1930, 3-13.
12. Home Department, File No.44/36/1934, 14 (Its text is not traceable); Patric, D., *Communism in India: 1924-27* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India), 263; Home Department, File No.44/36/1934, 15, 18; Ibid., 16.
13. The important among them such as Santokh Singh, Bhag Singh 'Canadian', Rattan Singh 'American' and Harjap Singh were either dead or behind the bars; File No.1929, Part-I, 1920 - Indian Office Library (Archives on Contemporary History of India, J.N.U., New Delhi); Home Department, File No.9-B, 1921, NAI, New Delhi.

which prevented them taking an objective view of the situation. Lajpat Rai, for instance, disapproved of *Ghadar* movement for he was doubtful about the success of the operation even with the German help. He had no objection to Indian revolutionaries obtaining money and arms from Germany but he thought it would be a mistake to use them immediately. In his opinion they should have been stored till a more favourable opportunity arose.¹⁴

The activities of the Indian National Congress and Chief *Khalsa Diwan* also acted as a damper to the revolutionary scheme in the country.¹⁵ While the *Ghadarites* had declared war on the British, these organizations appealed to help in the war effort with men and money. As a consequence to this, "there was certain measure of enthusiasm among the peasantry to join the army and to fight the war. Naturally, the story of the heroic stand by a battalion of the 14th Sikhs in Galipoli on 4th June, 1915, against an overwhelming force stirred the *Punjabi* youth more than the patriotic call from the *Ghadarites* to overthrow the British."¹⁶ After this, according to Michael O' Dwyer, so enthusiastic was their response, so gallant were their deeds and so generous the rewards and appreciation, that many of them have got the idea into their heads-that we won the War. Sir Michael O' Dwyer, however, did not mention the force, fines and other devices that were used by him and his officials to compel men in the Punjab to give their names for recruitment.

The *Ghadarites'* contact with Germany and help taken from that quarter also divided the revolutionaries and created apprehension among people in India, while it was travesty of facts, that they were German agents, many doubted whether the revolution with Germany's help would not mean only a change of masters. The German Government helped the *Ghadar* Party- because it suited their interests but the fears of some were completely misplaced. Ram Chandra's Pro-British activities during the *Ghadar* operation have also been interpreted by some as a reaction to the increasing dependence on Germany. Hardyal too, at later stage spoke against the German help; Khushwant Singh attributes many reasons for *Ghadar* failure when he observes :

"Lack of arms, lack of experience, bad leadership, the notorious inability of the revolutionaries to keep secrets; the tension between Germans and the *Ghadarites*, the efficiency of the British Intelligence Service which planted spies

14. They were peasants as well as workers. They organized themselves to defend the rights of the workers. In India they sought to organize the peasants while sympathizing with the labour class; Petric, D. *Communism in India: 1924-27* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India), 83-87; Williamson, H., *Communism in India : 1935* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India issue upto 1935), 20.
15. Ibid.; Petric, David, *Communism in India : 1924-27* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India), 83-87; Williamson, H., *Communism In India: 1935* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India issued up to 1935), 20.
16. For details see Adhikari, G., *Documents of History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol.1, 8; Home Department File No.235/II-1926; Kaye, Sir Cecil, *Communism in India*: unpublished documents from NAI, 1919-24, ed. by Subodh Rai, Calcutta : 1971, 167.

in the highest councils of the revolutionaries, the stern measures taken by the Government of India; the brutal methods adopted by the Punjab Police which compelled many of the leaders to inform against the colleagues contributed to the failure of the *Ghadar* rebellion.”

Though the *Ghadar* movement did not achieve anything spectacular, it set a new trend in the Punjab Politics. It however emphasized the international character of freedom struggle. The *Ghadarites* worked with organizations and individuals sympathized with their cause and took help from people and institutions in Afghanistan, China, Turkey, Switzerland, Sweden, Mexico, Ireland, America and Canada. Another contribution of *Ghadar* revolt was to transfer the base for revolutionary work for foreign countries to India which was essential to make the revolutionary struggle more effective. The immigrants return to the Punjab also helped in broadening the vision of people of the province. The revolutionaries who had lived in various countries knew their language and saw the conditions at these places with their own eyes and not through British press, could impress upon their compatriots the value of freedom more powerfully than several leaders living in India could do.

Furthermore, the supreme sacrifices made by the revolutionaries had a profound impact on the youth of this region (Punjab). Many came to believe that armed struggle was the only way to achieve freedom. The manner in which the *Ghadar* heroes went to the gallows, fought against the brutal treatment of the authorities in jails both in India and Andamans, escaped from the prison and jumped from moving trains made them legendary figures among the people of the Punjab. Gallows lost their terror and jails their horror which in turn not only gave impetus to subsequent revolutionary movements in this region but also led the Congress call for Civil Disobedience and Boycott Movements.

Another important feature of *Ghadar* movement was its secular character. Where nearly 95% members of the Party belonged to the Sikh religion on account of the composition of the immigrants, the *Ghadar* Party drew its leaders and members from all religious communities. The *Ghadar* agitation too retained its secular and non-communal character till end, despite efforts made by the British authorities and other interested parties to give it a communal colour. However, it is to be noted that the *Ghadar* party had established its close relations with the peasants and workers.

Here, to this may be added that the *Ghadar* party is relevant only to the extent of the formation and growth of the *Kirti Kisan* movement. The latter originated not as an extension of *Ghadar* Group¹⁷, but as a parallel body with the *Ghadar* Group and it definitely owed much of its initial impetus to the *Ghadar* Group in the United States. The idea of the formation of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan*

17. Williamson, H., *Communism in India, 1935* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department: Government of India, revised upto 1935), 271.

party originated with the *Ghadr* Group.¹⁸ In the party meeting held towards the end of 1922, it was decided to send Bhai Santokh Singh and Bhai Rattan Singh to India for organizing workers and peasants. The leaders entered India in May, 1923, but they were arrested in the tribal area of the NWF Province; later on they were released on surety towards the end of the year. Now Bhai Santokh Singh, who had stayed back in India, got in touch with the radical minded workers and peasants of Amritsar, Lahore and Dhariwal. Because of his efforts, workers and peasants formed a perceptible organization. The *Ghadr* Group earnestly desired links with the like minded *Kirtis*.¹⁹ The *Kirti Kisan* Party was formed with this object in view. This party wanted emancipation of the masses through democratization of India.²⁰

In due course the *Kirti Kisan* Party absorbed the militant spirit of the *Ghadr* Group and nursed anti imperialistic and anti-colonial ideas. As a consequence, they opposed imperialism as also the nationalist group like Babbar Akalis.²¹ By 1920 the *Ghadrites* had adopted economic and social theories of Karl Marx. They, therefore, started opposing imperialism, *Zamindara* class and bourgeoisie.²² They began to look upon the British Government as something more than a predatory organization maintained by coercion and terrorism and the same task was adopted by the workers and peasants' movement.²³ But here it should be clear that the *Ghadr* leaders disapproved of individual terrorism, for it had very little social significance.²⁴ However, they did not, in principle, condemn the assassination of public officials. The urgency of dealing with the traitors and informers, who obstructed the progress of the *Ghadr* movement at every step, compelled its leadership to revise their views. Various aspects of this problem were discussed at length in a number of articles, published in the *Ghadr*.

It may be pointed out that the problem of dealing with the *Jholichuks* (loyalists), which had assumed gravity and urgency for the *Ghadrites* did not figure in the program of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party. The *Kirti Kisan* Party started preparing itself for the use of force in bringing about national revolution and disbanding reactionary elements.²⁵ In short, the *Ghadr* Party had chosen the

18. Home Department, File No. 233/II/1926, 26, Williamson, H., *Communism in India 1935* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department: Government of India, revised up to 1935), 62. (Also see Section II of Chapter II of this book).

19. *Meerut Conspiracy Case Session Judgement*, 1930, Vol I, Pt. XXIX, 5984, NAI, New Delhi.

20. *Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers*: Sr. No. 167, Exhibit No. p. 344 (T), 771-Aims and Objects and Rules and Regulations of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party; Sr. No. 161, Exhibit No. 549 (15), 922-26; Also Sr. No. 19, Vol. XIV, Joint Statement of Nimbkar, A.S. and others, 4892.

21. Ibid.

22. Joint Statement of Nimbkar and others, 5415; Latala, Kartar Singh, '*Kirti-di-Unati-de-Saadhan*', published in *The Kirti*, Amritsar, September, 1927, p. 27.

23. *The Bulletin* (San Francisco), October 20, 1913, quoted in Brown, Emily C., *Hardayal, Hindu Revolutionary and Nationalist*, New Delhi, 1976, p. 142.

24. Quoted in Brown, Emily C., *Hardayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Nationalist*, New Delhi, 1976, 146, 160-61. For details see the *Ghadr* of November 29, 1913.

25. See Joint Statement of Nimbkar, R.S. and Others.

method of armed rebellion. However, the *Kirti Kisan Party* adopted two-fold strategy i.e. supporting mass movement and red terrorism.²⁶

The Punjab *Kirti Kisan Party* owed special debt to the *Ghadr* group for its role in founding the *Kirti*, a journal in Punjabi. It was designed to enunciate its policy and program. This organ published the principle of socialism and created class consciousness²⁷ among its readers in particular and the masses in general. It fulfilled its role of moulding public opinion and gave befitting replies to the Government policy of repression by promoting its sale and thus contributed towards the campaign for revolution.²⁸ It was similar to the appeal which had appeared in the *Ghadr* of November 8, 1913.²⁹ The message of socialism, class struggle, freedom of the press and complete independence was propagated by the *Kirti*.³⁰ Above all, the main theme of fighting against the British imperialism, colonialism and capitalism remained the focus.³¹ It's being fully appreciative of the contribution of the *Ghadr* Group, the *Kirti* ever since its appearance in 1926 followed the consistent policy of expounding their ideas of egalitarianism and complete independence.³² The readers of the *Kirti* were greatly benefited by reading the lives of the *Ghadrites*. The *Kirti* also got financial help from the *Ghadr* Group when it was in danger of being forced to suspend its publication. Even after the death of its founder, there was no change in the policy of the *Kirti*. It remained an effective medium of propaganda and instruction for the potential militant nationalists. It also advised them to avoid lapses in the *Ghadr* plan of action and to strengthen mass organization.

It is significant to note that while the *Kirti* fought the battle in India itself, its editors kept in close touch with the *Ghadr* Party in the United States.³³ Thus, it served as an effective channel of communication between the *Ghadr* Group and the Punjab *Kirti Kisan Party*.³⁴ A letter dated June 1, 1927, published in the *Kirti*, revealed how the *Ghadr* Group had helped the organizers of the *Kirti* in the formation of its policy. While this particular letter had hailed its inception and acclaimed its mission of creating awakening among the *Kirtis*, it emphasized the

26. Bala, Shastri Hardas, *Armed Struggle for Freedom, Ninety Years of Independence*, translated by S.S. Apte (Poona Kal Prakashan 1958), 252-53 (Hardas quotes at large from Khan Khoje's Diary which recorded the details about the *Ghadr* plan of action).

27. *The Kirti*, Amritsar, July, 1927, 13-15; June, 1929, 17-19; *The Kirti*, April, 1929, Mahatma Karl Marx, 7; May, 1929 (Comrade Karl Marx), 56-63.

28. *The Kirti* 'Frianghi-Shahi Da Takhta Dol Giya', December, 1929, 1-2.

29. Karr, J.C., *Political Trouble in India: 1907-17*, Indian reprint, Calcutta, 1973, p. 173.

30. *The Kirti*, Amritsar, December, 1929, pp. 1-2, *Meerut Jail Which Dake Do Kirti Aguan Da Zabani Suneha*, August 1929, p. 50, 126-27, *Kirti Lehar Nahin Dabegi*.

31. *The Kirti*, May Day, May 1929, p. 5.

32. *The Kirti*, 1914-15 *De Shahidan Ton Sikhia*, May, 1929, pp. 7-8.

33. *The Kirti*, March, 1930, pp. 43-52.

34. Home Department, File No. 44/36-1934- Political (Statement of Harjap Singh A member of the *Hindustan Ghadr Party*, 4; also File No. 6/10/1928, 39, NAI: New Delhi; for details also see File No. 235/II/1926, 30; *The Kirti*, February, 1926, 77-78; March, 1926; July, 1926, p.20.

need of organizing and enlisting the support of a large number of peasants and workers in the province whose needs and potentialities had so far been ignored. It further emphasized the need of widening the scope of the program of the *Kirti Kisan* Party so as to include the benefits and privileges the peasantry and workers would obtain in a free India of the future. This Party had surely realized the value of their advice, for its leaders and its mouth piece; the *Kirti* proclaimed that the success of the freedom struggle depended upon the extent of involvement of the *Kirtis* and *Kisans*.³⁵

Many letters from abroad gave guidance to the party. The extent of its ideological appeal was reflected in the favourable reaction of the peasants.³⁶ This journal often requested foreign powers to grant asylum to those who were doing a lot for the peasantry but were on the verge of being liquidated by the Government. To substantiate it, the *Kirti* of August, 1927, carried an appeal from the *Ghadr* Group to the Chinese nationalists to guard their right of asylum by protecting Dasuand Singh, from being arrested.³⁷ The writings of Harjap Singh notably "Lenin and Kisan", "Hinduism and Terrorism"³⁸ and "Arrest of Santa Singh at Madras",³⁹ in this journal highlighted the different forces of the *Kirti Kisan* movement in the Punjab and its ideological stand on various issues such as the official policy of arresting the *Ghadrite* emissaries in India. The *Ghadr* Group highly appreciated the *Kirti* for the dissemination of anti imperialistic and anti-capitalistic ideas. Many Indians living abroad came to India not only to assess the role of the *Kirti* group but also to help its growth and spread.⁴⁰ This helped the *Kirti Kisan* struggle to enroll large number of members.

In short, the *Ghadr* Group displays a lot of initiative in organizing peasants and workers which was visible with the founding of the *Kirti*, its growth and sustenance. Their contribution to the rise and expansion of the *Kirti Kisan* movement in the Punjab was not limited to their successful early efforts for the formation of the *Kirti Kisan* Party in April, 1927, Bhag Singh 'Canadian' exercised a lot of influence in the evolution of its ideology. The militant spirit of *Ghadrites* in fighting injustice enabled the *Kirti Kisan* organization to evolve their own style of militant struggle. Mass action was given priority and terrorism was put aside as the last resort to be used against the imperialists and reactionaries.

In the later half of 1930, when the party embarked upon action, its members, the *Ghadr* emissaries had perforce, to shed the role of mentors.⁴¹ Another reason

35. *The Kirti*, Amritsar, 'Zamindar Shabha', February 1928, 77-78; *The Kirti*, March, 1930, Brij Narain's, *Zamindar Te Kisan*, 16-19.

36. Home Department, File No. 44/26/1934, 15, 18; *The Kirti*, July, 1927, 50.

37. *The Kirti*, Amritsar, August 1927, Dasaunda Singh was an Indian National in China.

38. For details see *The Kirti*, Amritsar, February, 1930, 3-13.

39. Home Department, File No. 44/36/1934, 14 (Its text is not traceable).

40. Patric, D., *Communism in India: 1924-27* (Compiled in the intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India, 263, Home Department, File No. 44/36/1934, 15-18.

41. The important among them such as Santokh Singh, Bhag Singh 'Canadian', Rattan Singh 'American' and Harjap Singh were either dead or behind the bars.

for the gradual eclipse of their influence was the increasing indifference on the part of the international to the workers' and peasants' parties in India, the *Ghadrite* emissaries, who had trusted the Communist International as a guide, felt bewildered over its change of policy. Furthermore, forcible cession of the publication of the *Kirti*, the stronghold of the *Ghadr* Group, eroded their control over the peasants and workers' movement in this province. Moreover, the emphasis shifted to the peasants' agitation from 1935 to 1939 and this agitation threw up new leaders known as '*Babas*', during this period.

It will not be out of place if some more facts about the *Ghadr* Group in connection with the freedom struggle are cited here. There was a significant difference between the Friends of India and the *Ghadr* Party. The league could accept the hold of Russia but would not tolerate a communist propaganda. The *Ghadr* Group believed in the overthrow of British rule by arms and did not believe in any other method.⁴² However, they recognized that it failed because it could not carry the masses along with them. The *Ghadr* Group, though not successful, was able to take initiative in destroying the British in India and establishing a people's Government in its stead.⁴³ This aspect has already been discussed.

It is also not out of the place to state that the *Ghadrites* belonged to the small proprietary holders who had gone to the foreign countries as labourers. They maintained their contacts with the third international organization through Rattan Singh.⁴⁴ Five of them went to Russia to be trained in Communist propaganda.⁴⁵ They maintained contacts with the *Kirti* through Kabul centre. The *Kirti* also maintained its links with the Red Peasants International and other groups.⁴⁶ Many militant papers like *Desh Sewak*, *Punjabee*, *Akali-te-Pardesi*, etc. were instruments of links with the *Ghadr* Party and other Groups. Money was coming from the *Ghadr* Group and other societies yet the *Kirti* was only one which supported the Communist ideas and ideology.⁴⁷ The

42. File No. 1929, Part I, 1920- India Office Library (Archives on Contemporary History of India, JNU, New Delhi).

43. Home Department, File No. 9-B, 1921, NAI, New Delhi.

44. They were peasants as well as workers. They organized themselves to defend the rights of the workers. In India they sought to organize the peasants while sympathizing with the labour class. Petric David, op.cit., 142; Home Department, File No. 41/1926-Political, NAI, New Delhi.

45. *Communism in India: 1924-27* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India, 142, Home Department, File No. 14/1926-Political NAI, New Delhi.

46. Petric, David, *Communism in India: 1924-27*, Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India, File No. 41/1926-Political, NAI, New Delhi.

47. For details see Adhikari, G., *Documents of History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. I, 8; Home Department, File No. 235/II-1926; Kaye, Sir Cecil, *Communist in India*: unpublished Documents from NAI, 1919-24, ed. by Subodh Rai, Calcutta, 1971, 167. For ideological evolution of its leaders see Ghosh, Ajoy, *Article and Speeches*, Moscow: 1962; Bipan Chandra, "The ideological Development of the Revolutionary Terrorists in Northern India in the 1920" in *Socialism in India*, edited by B.R. Nanda, 1972; Josh, Sohan Singh, *Hindustan Ghadr Party*, PPH, Delhi, 1977, 17.

Naujawan Bharat Sabha also derived inspiration from the *Ghadr* heroes. Hence, there is, no doubt, that the *Ghadr* Group involved the masses especially the rural one in propagating the leftist ideology in the arena of freedom struggle.⁴⁸

48. For its success or failure see Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 183; Josh, Sohan Singh, *Hindustan Ghadr Party*, PPH, Delhi, 1977, 32.

THE GHADR LEHAR : NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS

Nazer Singh*

In order to understand deeply but clearly the genesis, dimensions and impact of the Ghadr movement it shall be proper to begin with a recent work got published in the form of a book by an American scholar Harold A. Gould at Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, United States of America in 2006.¹ Harold being an anthropologist seriously worked to study Indian History and Civilization to enrich the prevailing journalistic perceptions about the Indians in America. His concern becomes visible when he starts his book by reminding us as to how the relationship between India and U.S.A. had entered a new friendly phase in 2005 that witnessed the Indian Prime Minister's visit to U.S.A. This visit was highly appreciated by the American press and also by the higher authorities in Washington.² Harold by this event was inspired that led him to write something on the Ghadr of 1913-14. He had to his credit an article on 1857 upheaval. In his book he had denominated it as 'The Utopian Side of the Indian Uprising (1857)'.³ It was published in 1994. After this he dealt with the grass roots of Indian Politics in Faizabad district of U.P. Before these two articles he had written a book on the Foreign Policy of U.S.A. particularly towards India and South East Asia from the time of Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan's time in 1992. We know that Roosevelt stood for the Second World War and the origin of cold war policy and era. Reagan represented the post cold war phase of the American policy.

Harold himself discloses his intellectual reliance upon a number of Western and Indian westernized scholars to complete his work entitled *Sikhs, Swamis, Students, And Spies*. This work has its sub-title as 'The Indian Lobby in the United States, 1900-1946'. As the main title part has been borrowed by him from an article got published from Calcutta by Lala Hardyal in July 1911 in *The Modern Review*. The article was entitled as '*Sikhs, Swamis, Students, and Spies*'.⁴ Harold tells that spies have referred to "the agents whom the British authorities employed to try and stifle the growth of nationalism and anti colonialism among South Asian immigrants".⁵ Taking Hardyal's presentation virtually as a positive political slogan

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1. See about the author portion of the hard bound book by its cover toward the end, Harold A. Gould, *Sikhs, Swamis, Students and Spies*, The Indian Lobby in the United States, 1900-1946 (Sage Publications : New Delhi, 2006).
2. See, Harold A. Gould, *Sikhs, Swamis, Students, And Spies*, Foreword, p. 12.
3. See, *Bibliography* by Harold in, *Sikhs, Swamis, Students And Spies*, p. 442.
4. See, Harold, op. cit., Introduction, p. 41.
5. Ibid.

Harold employed it as the title of his own writing, for this slogan was historically 'irresistible'. Secondly it stands for the influx of original Indians who had migrated to America and who organized the Ghadr Movement.

Har Dayal has been considered vastly by Harold. Har Dayal did not go to America directly or as a student. First he went to England and then to Paris. From France he went to Algeria, Morocco, Martingue, Hawai, and finally he reached San Francisco (USA). It was in 1911 that he completed his long travel to America. It was Pandit Kanshi Ram who had invited him to San Francisco. Accepting this invitation he could reach there in March 1913.⁶ Truly speaking Har Dayal had reached the United States in February 1911 to study Buddhism at Harvard University. Born and brought up in Delhi he knew various languages like Urdu, Persian, and Sanskrit. He had received his English education through the Christian Mission School in Delhi including St. Stephens.⁷

Intellectual maturity of Har Dayal was rooted in the radical ideas of R.C. Dutt, Paranjpye and Bal Gangadhar Tilak.⁸ Dutt was a professor of History at London University. Politically he was committed to the Indian National Congress but was also an important civil servant. R.P. Paranjpye (1876-1966) was a true Indian; he enjoyed his scholarship at Cambridge. According to Harold, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was "for all practical purposes the father of right-wing and also of Hindu nationalism". We know how by the end of 20th century 'right-wing' Hindu nationalism had taken the shade of *Hindutva* in the present day scenario.⁹ Harold further writes that Har Dayal was influenced by the *Arya Samaj* and its activist Bhai Parmanand during 1914 and 1920. Obviously both London and Lahore had their impact upon him. Interestingly Bhai Parmanand himself was influenced by Theosophy ideology/philosophy and also the teachings of Swami Vivekananda.¹⁰

Har Dayal's role and activities in San Francisco would be incomplete without a reference to Professor Teja Singh of *Khalsa Diwan* in America. They knew each other since their London days. However, Teja Singh was fond of California; the city was inhabited by 'thousands of Sikhs and other Punjabi labourers. They were working in the fields and factories on the west coast of the United States'.¹¹ However, the inhabitants did lack in leadership in their struggle which they had launched for acceptance of economic equality. Teja Singh was M.A. in English and LL.B. passed scholar. He was for his own moral transformation, he was "inspired by Swami Vivekananda ideals".¹² But he was baptized in Sikhism by Sant Attar Singh. He was also in teaching job for some time at the Khalsa College. Reaching New York in July 1908 he moved to American academic institutions and

6. See, Harold, op. cit., p. 152.

7. Ibid., p. 168.

8. See, Harold, op. cit., pp. 154-155.

9. Ibid., p. 155.

10. For Bhai Parmanand See, Harold, op. cit., pp.156, 160-67; For Teja Singh's inspiration by Vivekananda see, Harold, Ibid., p. 107.

11. See, Harold, op. cit. pp. 104, 107-08, 110, 113, 164, 167, 177, 197.

12. Ibid., p. 107.

was admitted to Columbia University Teachers' College. He wrote an article in Punjabi language for a Canadian Newspaper. It popularized him in Canada; he was invited by the Sikhs there. He visited Vancouver, Victoria, Portland and San Francisco in September 1908.¹³ After spending a month in U.S.A., he again went to Canada. However, he worked to uplift his countrymen in both Canada and the United States. Harold writes, "Teja Singh rapidly emerged as a major player in the cadre of leaders which the Canadian Sikh Community was casting up."¹⁴ We are further told that he has been engaged in community's work ever since, labouring with a remarkable singleness of purpose. According to Nihal Singh he was "planning to organize his people and establish them on a sound religious, moral, social, educational and economic basis."¹⁵ We know that this Saint Nihal Singh had published his first important piece of political literature about a separate Sikh Identity in *The Modern Review* in 1909. Later Dr. Ganda Singh used this piece to advocate the idea of a Sikh religious and cultural separatism directed against the Hindus in old Punjab.¹⁶ Ganda Singh did so while writing in *The Panjab Past and Present* of 1973 (See, Ganda Singh (ed.), article *The Singh Sabha and Other Socio-Religious Movements in the Punjab (1850-1925)*, P.U. Patiala, 3rd edition, 1997, pp. 12-20) and got it published.

However, the use of journals and newspapers for their political tasks was not confined to Har Dayal and Saint Nihal Singh or Ganda Singh. It was employed by the United States regime also to disrupt and curtail the *Ghadar* Movement. Harold reminds his readers as to how the British Government in India had sent its 200 spies to promote divisions among the Ghadarites operating in Canada and the United States.¹⁷ On April 14, 1918, the *San Francisco Chronicle* claimed that "about 200 members of the British Secret Service had been in San Francisco for more than two years."¹⁸ This British step was taken because she "regarded American tolerance of revolutionaries to be excessive". Reacting to this British step the U.S. Crime Branch of administration started making use of data of intelligence as supplied by the British spies about the Indian and German conspirators. Two newspapers the *New York Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* in particular sensationalized this alleged German conspiracy.¹⁹ *The Chronicle* was notorious in describing that the *Ghadar* activities was due to racial attitude of the Hindus suffering from the flames of oriental passion but working under the German money and modern weapons.

The British intelligence system was operating successfully in Europe, it had implanted one of its spies among the *Ghadarites* and in their revolutionary

13. Ibid., p. 108.

14. Ibid., p. 109.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 212.

17. Ibid.

18. For *New York Times* and the *San Francisco Times*, See, Harold, op. cit., p. 213. These papers were actually indulged in creating anti-Asian racism in the United States – N.S.

19. For Jodh Singh's role, see, Harold, Ibid., p. 215.

organization also. He was Jodh Singh who later on directly figured in the San Francisco trial.²⁰ The Ghadarites lost their Secrecy as well as Communication Code to the British when their agent in Hong Kong who happened to be a Japanese named Dr. Daus Dekker was arrested.²¹ Again one another Ghadar supporter – Harambalal Gupta, a member of the Berlin Committee of India also a protege of Har Dayal, neutralized through the Japanese Government by the British intelligence. Gupta was supposed to lead the Ghadarites to attack Calcutta via Burma. This scheme for him was originally mooted by Jodh Singh.

‘Why did Ghadar fail’? Harold dealt with this question to conclude his own views of this Ghadar movement.²² According to him the major factor for its failure was the defeat of Germany in the first world war (1918). Germany was the principal source of money and logistically support for the Ghadar. The other factors and circumstances mentioned in this respect have been quoted by him from the book of Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh, i.e. *Ghadar, 1915 : India's First Armed Revolution* (New Delhi, 1966). Harold concludes by asserting that by the close of World War-I a considerable number of Indians had found their way into New York's where the political environment was quite suitable for them. In fact this city turned out to be a melting pot of contending ideologies rooted in anarchism, nationalism, communism and socialism after 1918.²³

Harold's sources of information about Ghadar and other anti-colonial movements were not confined to the Indian public figures like Har Dayal and Saint Nihal Singh's writings or the activities of Professor Teja Singh in both Canada and the United States. He mostly depended upon Khushwant Singh and Satinder Singh's book. However, Harold in his own way referred in detail the work of a CID man named Hopkinson, he was patronized by the Ottawa Government to disrupt the Ghadar organization and also mislead the Sikh Community in Vancouver by 1906.²⁴ His complete name was William C. Hopkinson and he emerged as the main leader of White Counter-Insurgency during his six years work since 1908. Soon he did join the U.S. Surveillance. According to Jensen he “built his career around the desire of the British to know about Indians who were going to oppose their rule in India.”²⁵

Hopkinson was born in 1878 in Yorkshire and his father was a Sergeant in Indian Army at Allahabad. In 1904 Hopkinson had become a Police Instructor in Calcutta and he knew *Punjabi* and *Gurmukhi* before going to Vancouver in 1907. The Govt. of Canada employed him as an official and interpreter in the immigration department.²⁶ He lived in a poor immigrant suburb of Vancouver, he had a shack

20. Ibid.

21. See, Harold, op. cit., p. 226.

22. Ibid., p. 226.

23. See, Harold, pp. 104, 110, 113-14, 135-147, 188-191 etc.

24. Ibid., p. 135.

25. Ibid., pp. 135-36.

26. For Bela's violence see, Harold, op. cit., pp. 135-36.

where he lived part time under the alias of Narain Singh, leading the life of a penniless labourer from Lahore, wearing a turban and a fake beard. He used to attend the Sikh *Gurdwaras* and social functions to collect his information about the immigrants he suspected. One of his Sikh henchmen was Bela Singh, a former soldier from Hoshiarpur district.²⁷ In fact Hopkinson had created a small coterie of henchman to spies on the Sikh community. He collected his information about the plotters and agitators. The Kamagatamaru incident led to the creation of violence among Sikhs, the agitator Sikhs and *Punjabis*. A wave of killings and woundings did occur. Bela Singh and his *thugs* indulged in this violence. Two of Hopkinson's informants named Harnam Singh and Arjan Singh were shot dead. As a reaction Bela Singh once fired upon the Sikhs in a *Gurdwara*, wounded nine persons and killed two by shooting namely Bhag Singh and Bhajan Singh. In this trial case he was protected by Hopkinson. While presenting his testimony in the court room he was, however, assassinated by Mewa Singh the priest of the *Gurdwara*.²⁸ It was followed by Mewa Singh's trial who defended himself by referring to Sikhism and its morality impact upon him. This era of anger and poverty forced the Sikhs in Canada to shift themselves in large number to the U.S. Most of them were the demoralized soldiers from the Indian army coming from rural Punjab. These restive men undoubtedly constituted the vanguard of emigrating Sikh peasantry. This had been mentioned in their respective writings by Archana B. Verma, Janet Jensen and Leonard, before Harold could write his book.²⁹

In addition to Verma, Jensen and Leonard, Harold rely upon the other western and also westernized Indian scholars such as :

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|----------------------|--|
| (I) Emily Brown | (VI) M.V. Kamath |
| (II) Tapan Mukherjee | (VII) Khushwant Singh and Satinder Singh |
| (III) Hugh Johnston | (VIII) Nirode Barook |
| (IV) Ruth Price | (IX) N.G. Barrier |
| (V) Susan Bean | (X) Leonard Gordon. |

We know that Emily Brown C. produced her work in 1975. It was on Har Dayal as 'Hindu Revolutionary and Reformist'. Tapan Mukherjee dealt with Taraknath Dass; his work was published in 1997. Hugh Johnston had described the Kamagatamaru episode and got published in 1979 by Oxford University Press. Ruth Price explained the lives of Agnes Smedley in 2005 by New York, Oxford University Press.

Archana Verma had described the *Making of Little Punjab : Patterns of Immigration*, published in 2002 in India.³⁰ M.V. Kamath had to his credit a book

27. Ibid., p. 137.

28. For Archana Verma see, Ibid., pp. 82-83, 89-90 and 142, for Janet Jansen see, Ibid., pp. 81, 88, 93, 100, 128-29, 131, 135, 142, 267-69, 289-90, for Karen Leonard see, Ibid., pp. 79, 89-90, 92-94, 96, 142, 145.

29. See, Arnold's Bibliography, p. 445.

30. Ibid., p. 443.

on the relations between United States and India from 1776 to 1996, and he got it published in 1998. Khushwant Singh is known for his book *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II published in 1966. N.G. Barrier had worked about *The Sikh Diaspora*, and he was published in Delhi. Susan Bean got published his book in 2001 and it was about *Yankee India*. Harold had used this book for his first chapter. Likewise N.K. Barooah had in 2004 dealt with anti-imperialist moves of an Indian in Europe.

Interestingly Harold's Bibliography refers to Sohan Singh Josh and his book on *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna* as the founder of the Ghadar Party was published in 1970.³¹ But Harold remained silent about the link between the growth of Ghadar organization and communist movement in North India in 1922 and 1923 respectively. Comrade Josh has referred to this relationship in his 2 volumes about the Ghadar.

However, it will be proper to have a critical look at the British Indian presentation of Ghadar Movement in India before summing up the contribution of Josh in this regard. Yet, it must be noticed that there is a similarity between Josh and Harold so far international aspect of Ghadar Movement is considered.

According to Harold the United States had participated in the opening of China for trade towards the end of the 18th century. She succeeded in establishing her trade links with China through Canton.³² Gradually this trade exceeded in magnitude and turned out to be bigger than that of American trade with British India. Strangely Harold did not refer to the opium trade and opium wars (1842-58). But he did refer to Boxer Rebellion (1898-1900) in China that had inspired the British army to enrol the Sikhs to take interest in the available and better economic opportunities in British Columbia and later in California.³³ Further he also refers to the Ghadar's army route to reach India through the South East Asian countries. Harold has called it the *Pacific Rim* theater of struggle that was comprised of Shanghai, Hong Kong, Canton, Manila, Singapore, Rangoon and Japan.³⁴ This route had the support of Imperial Germany. China also for she was interested in it in the beginning of World War-I. Consequently there did emerge certain Sikh groups in Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Canton, Manila, Bangkok and Indonesia. It were these groups of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims who had been used by the Ghadar group to build itself after 1913 in South East Asia.

Gurdit Singh of Kamagatamaru had started his life in South East Asia with his arrival in Malaya. Soon he went to China and worked for a Chinese pork-dealer in Taiping and gradually began learning Chinese and Malay in this process.³⁵ After some time he started a dairy supplying the Sikh segment stationed there. Quickly he had some railway contracts and increased his income by planting rubber. Due to his activities he became influential in the local Sikh community.

31. See, Harold, pp. 52, 78-79.

32. Ibid., pp. 78-79.

33. Ibid., p. 149.

34. For Gurdit Singh, see, Harold, pp. 115-22, 124-26, 128-31, 205.

35. Ibid., p. 120.

Interestingly Kamagatamaru voyage was to move from Calcutta to Vancouver via Hong Kong, Shanghai, Kobe (Japan) and Yokohama. It was at Shanghai and Moji that the travellers of Kamagata had received bundles of Ghadar literature including its newspaper and collection of revolutionary poetry entitled *Ghadar dee Goonj*.³⁶ Obviously the opium wars had connected the British Indian seaports like Goa, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta to the Chinese seaports occupied by England, France and America such as Hong Kong, Shanghai and Canton. Hong Kong had a Sikh *Gurdwara* for devotion and cultural needs of the Sikhs and other communities. We must know how the Sikh units of British India army had served the British Imperial or military interests in the Far East, the Middle East, Africa and even in Europe during the World War I and II. Due to it the Sikhs became the vanguard of substantial Indian immigration into Canada and the United States.

Harold writes that the Boxer Rebellion gave a stimulus to Sikh soldiers to be aware of potential economic opportunities on the opposite side of the Pacific. According to Hugh Johnston, the first Sikh batch that reached Canada in 1904 were encouraged by the Hong Kong agents of the Canadian Pacific Railway. After it more Sikhs began to reach there to seek jobs in the lumber yards and saw mills in British Columbia. In fact, the Lumber Companies and railway contractors wanted them. Khushwant Singh and Satinder Singh say that by the autumn of 1906 more than 1500 Punjabi labourers were working in or near Vancouver.³⁷ They were doing so at the cost of Chinese and Japanese. We know that in India itself the opium wars after 1839 had linked Bombay to Sindh and Madhya Pradesh and gradually it did emerge as an *opium city* or popularly called as Early Victorian Bombay. In his recent book *Opium City* Amar Farooqui (January 2006) referred to it.

We have already referred to the sources of information or intelligence data collected and presented by the British Intelligence system in India, the United States and Canada. The Punjab Police and C.I.D. acting in collaboration with Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India issued the *Punjab Ghadar Directory* for its officials in 1917. However, the Director, Intelligence Bureau superseded the Punjab Directory by issuing a new Ghadar Directory in 1934.³⁸ Whereas the Punjab publication had dealt with the participants – both living and dead – of the Ghadar Movement. But the new Directory did not include names of the killed or expired Ghadarites. In spite of this difference between the two, the later version has a tremendous information about the Ghadar leadership, their activities in different regions of America, Europe, Africa, Afghanistan and India.³⁹ It further demonstrate a number of Indians especially the Sikhs who were associated with Ghadar through China, Manila, Malaya, Singapore and Japan.

36. See, Harold, p. 87.

37. *The Ghadar Directory* (Reprint), Publication Bureau Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, pp. VII+298.

38. See, the Title page of the above Directory.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

The Directory of 1934 refers to many a Ghadarites who were Indians but associated with China and its cities. It tells us about the following Ghadarites :

1. Banta Singh a Jat of Chabbal was a *sowar* in the 11th Lancers in 1905 but was dismissed due to his insubordination. In 1906 he went to Shanghai and became a Constable in the Municipal Police. Again he was dismissed from his post in October 1910 because he was a source of quarrels between the Sikhs of Malwa and Majha tracts. Subsequently he was employed in Shanghai – Nanking Railway and became intimate with Ghadar activists led by Tehl Singh. Soon Tehl Singh sent him on a Ghadar mission to Siam. In Feb. 1916 he again shifted to Nanking. He was arrested in Hankow and was sent to Shanghai once again. From there he was deported to India. In India he was restricted to his village in January 1919. He had his *Jagir* in Ambala district. While living there he did 'hold Akali views'.⁴⁰
2. Bir Singh was a Jat of village Thikriwala, district Gurdaspur. He returned to India from Shanghai in 1914 and worked in the party of Sher Singh. He had an automatic pistol and for it he was arrested. He was imprisoned for 21 years in India.
3. Bishan Singh, Jat, of village Varpal, Police Station Jandiala, was a Constable in the Shanghai Police. In October 1914 he returned from Shanghai to attend *Jhar Sahib* meeting; there he attempted to collect men for the Chabba dacoity. He was tried for the Lahore Conspiracy Case and sentenced to transportation for life.⁴¹
4. Bishan Singh of Dodher, Police Station Sarhali, Amritsar, returned from Manila to India in the *Komagatamaru*. He took part in *Ghadar* in 1915; he was convicted for life. He was released in 1920 but took part in Akali agitation. He had been serving as a *sewadar* in Golden Temple, Amritsar since 1929.⁴²
5. Bishan Singh of Burjraike had been in America and Hong Kong before his return to India in 1913. He served the Shanghai Municipal Police but he resigned from it in 1916. By 1926 he went to Japan and came in touch with the Ghadarites in Sanfrancisco.
6. Bishan Singh of Police Station Baghapurana district Ferozepur went to Shanghai in 1913 and became a Warder in Shanghai Municipal Jail. But he was dismissed for gambling. By 1919 he turned out to be a Ghadarite.⁴³
7. Dalip Singh of village Kaoni, Police Station Muktsar became a Secretary to Baba Gurdit Singh of *Komagatamaru*. He disappeared after the Budge Budge violence but reappeared in May 1933. In Dec. 1926 he was elected Vice-President of the Shiromani Akali Dal and denounced the Govt. policy towards the Maharaja of Nabha. Later on he took part in Indian freedom movement.

40. Ibid., p. 41.

41. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

42. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

43. Ibid., p. 61.

- under Kharak Singh and Sardul Singh Cavessieur. Cavessieur belonged to a holy Sikh family of the region between Nabha and Patiala.⁴⁴
8. Ganda Singh of *Tehsil Zira* was a watchman at Hankow and he was sympathetic to Chiang Kai Shek by November 1928. In 1927 he became a member of Ghadr Party in Hankow. He welcomed M.N. Roy who had visited the Hankow *Gurdwara* in April 1927. Later he worked in Nanking. By 1931 and 1934 he was an active Ghadr agent in Hankow, China.⁴⁵
 9. Gurmukh Singh of village Lalton Khurd returned to India by the ship Komagataru. He was involved in Ghadr by 1914 and did participate in the Mansura Dacoity in Malwa region. In 1923 he reached Kabul and in Dec. 1926 he was elected Vice-President of the Indian National Club, Kabul. By the same year he was reported to be acting for the Bolsheviks. In 1927 he went towards Moscow with Rattan Singh. Upto 1933 he was a connecting link between the members of Ghadr Party in America and Russia. The new Directory describes him as "one of the most dangerous revolutionaries".⁴⁶
 10. Hari Singh of village Kakar, Lopoke, was a Watchman at Shanghai but returned to India. He worked for sedition at the Nankana and Tarn Taran fairs. He was an associate of Ganda Singh S/o Lehna Singh of village Sur Singh, district Lahore. In the Lahore Conspiracy Case he was sentenced to transportation for life. He returned from Andamans in March 1929.⁴⁷
 11. Kala Singh, Jat of Bhure, Police Station, Jhabbal served in the Malay State Gardes for eleven years and returned to India in 1906. He joined the *Jhar Sahib* meetings and took part in attacking the *Tehsil*. He was made an approver in the First Conspiracy Case. In 1934 he was a pensioner of *British China Police* and lived in the village *Gurdwara* as a Nihang Sikh and hold political views as if he was an Akali but was addicted to *Bhang*. He had no property in the village.⁴⁸
 12. Rattan Singh, alias Santa Singh, alias Hari Singh, alias Ishar Singh, alias Ghulam Muhammad, was from a village in Banga Police Station. He went to Fiji in 1904 and then reached Hong Kong in 1913. In 1917 he had joined the Ghadr Party under Bhagwan Singh Viring. In 1919 he was in Ghadr and endeavoured to establish connections between the Ghadr Party and Soviet authorities at the 4th Congress of the Third Communist International held in Moscow in 1922. Another Ghadr leader from America named Santokh Singh had accompanied him to Moscow and they presented their view that 'the Ghadr and Akali movements were one and the same'. Rattan Singh and Santokh Singh requested the Afghan ambassador and regime in Afghanistan

44. Ibid., p. 77.

45. Ibid., pp. 96-97.

46. Ibid., p. 104.

47. Ibid., p. 148.

48. Ibid., pp. 250-252.

to help them in their future work at Amritsar.⁴⁹ Having failed to get assistance from Kabul they sought help from M.N. Roy's Indian Communist Party in Berlin. In May 1923 the two left Russia for India via Persia. Santokh Singh was arrested in the North West Frontier Province but Rattan Singh escaped and went to America. In the United States he collected funds and sent it to Santokh Singh to start his *Kirti* newspaper. He visited Punjab in 1926 and went to China to recruit young men for training in Russia, Germany and Turkey.⁵⁰ In 1927 he left China for Afghanistan but went to America. Again he went to China and reached Hankow in June 1928. In 1930 he organized Ghadr Party in South America. In 1934 he was in Germany and the new Ghadr Directory described him as "one of the most active and dangerous leaders of the Ghadr movement."⁵¹

Our narrative of the founders and activists of the Ghadr will remain incomplete till we write something about its growth. Hardyal was forced in March 1914 to leave the United States that was pressurized by Britain to do so. After his departure the task of leading the Ghadr organization was performed by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna and Santokh Singh. Bhakna and Santokh Singh acted as its President and General Secretary, respectively. Santokh Singh was a well read person. He toured for propagation almost all the American areas inhabited by the Indians, he was to convince them on the significance of his own slogan 'freedom or den'.⁵²

Santokh Singh had attracted the attention of Sohan Singh Josh. He has described his visit to Moscow by the end of 1922 and his connections with the communist movement, Kirti Kisan Organization and its newspaper *Kirti* in 1926.⁵³ Besides Josh it is the *Desh Bhagat Yadgaar*, Julundhar who had produced a book in Punjabi entitled as *Ghadri Yodha Bhai Santokh Singh, Jiwan Atte Likhtan*. This book came out in 2003 and it was published in Julundhar.⁵⁴

It must be noticed that *Desh Bhagat Yadgaar* Committee has its own history. Santokh Singh belonged, by birth, to a village in district Amritsar. The *Yadgaar* Committee was actually rooted in the Resolution of Central Sikh League adopted in 1920. Committee's original name was *Sikh Keidi Parivar Sahaik Committee*.⁵⁵ It was on November 21, 1924 that this committee was reorganized on the advise of Bhai Santokh Singh, Baba Wasakha Singh of Dodehar and Kartar Singh of Lalton to do so.⁵⁶ Wasakha Singh and Kartar Singh were the President and General

49. Ibid., p. 251.

50. Ibid., p. 252.

51. See, Harold, op. cit., p. 221.

52. See, Sohan Singh Josh, *Hindustan Ghadar Party - A Short History* (People's Publishing House : New Delhi, 1977), pp. 167, 183, 205.

53. *Ghadri Yodha Bhai Santokh Singh, Jiwan Atte Likhtan* (Julundhar, 2003).

54. See, Ibid., *passim*.

55. For Baba Wasakha Singh, see, *Directory of 1934*, op. cit., pp. 295-96.

56. See, a biographical accounts about Sohan Singh Bhakna in Punjabi language and published under the title *Jiwan Sangram Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna* (Ambala Cantonment, 2000), p. 83.

Secretary of the reorganized committee, respectively. It was this reorganized body that established itself in Jullundhar instead of Amritsar due to its decision to have Wasakha its Head in 1927. However, he worked for Sikh League, *Kirti Akhbar* and attended the Indian National Congress Sessions of 1928 (Calcutta), 1930 (Lahore) and 1931 (Karachi). After his death it was Bhai Gurmukh Singh who became its President.

It shall not be proper to deal with the historical literature and inspired by the Desh Bhagat Parivar Committee after 1947. Moreover, it is wrong to presume that the *Ghadr* Organization's concern with History and Ideology began only after India's independence. The study of Historiography of the Ghadr in Punjab has surely been important. It had History and it's writers who were also associated with *Ghadr* due to their anti-British activities before 1947. They were :

1. Harjap Singh of Mahilpur's Diary : It was written by him while he was in Multan Jail. It tells about the *Ghadr* movement's functioning from 1917 to 1925. Harjap was the president of Ghadr group upto 1925. This was finally published as a book by the Desh Bhagat Yadgaar Committee in 1998.⁵⁷
2. Kesar Singh's, *Ghadri Te Kama* was published by Awami Printing Press, Jullandhar. Kesar Singh wrote this book about Niranjana Singh of village Pandori and Ladha Singh. It tells about the division of Ghadar Organization into Malwa and non-Malwa factions in 1926. This split was caused by Dalip Singh Gill of Ludhiana. He was a spy of and for the British India Government. Politically he was assisted by Gopal Singh and the British Council upto 1932. Gopal Singh happened to be the leader of Ghadr movement.⁵⁸
3. Another work appeared in Hindi language and it was entitled as *Jeewan Sangram* that dealt with the life of Sohan Singh Bhakna. This biographical work was published in Ambala Cantonment in the year 2000.⁵⁹

It is desirable to point out that Desh Bhagat Committee had constituted a panel of its own to write the History and Ideology of Ghadr Movement. The Panel was comprised of Sohan Singh Bhakna, Sant Singh Sekhon, Sohan Singh Josh, Gyani Hira Singh Dard and Gurcharn Singh Sainsara. In 1954 Gurcharn Singh began to write his book *Ghadr Party Da Itihas* and completed it in 1969. However, the first book on Ghadr History had already appeared in 1954. It was written by Jagjit Singh in Punjabi and it was also the year when Gurcharn Singh's work had begun.⁶⁰

4. In 1977 Sohan Singh Josh got published his *Hindustan Ghadr Party – A Short History*. We shall refer to it in some detail later on. After 12 years of

57. See, *Diary Gadari Baba Harjap Singh* (Jullundhar, 1998), pp.172, *passim*.

58. See, Kesar Singh, *Gadhri Atte Kama* (Punjabi), Awami Printing Press, Jullundhar, pp. 13-20.

59. For the life of Sohan Singh Bhakna see his biography published by Desh Bhagat Yadgaar Committee under the title *Jeewan Sangram*.

60. For the biographical account of Santokh Singh, see, *Ghadri Yodha Bhai Santokh Singh : Jiwan Atte Likhtan* (Jullundhar : 2003), *passim*.

Josh's History, there appeared a book written by Bhagat Singh Bilga and was published in 1989.⁶¹ It was entitled as *Ghadr Lehar De Anfole Varke*, Josh did refer to this work.

5. It is significant to notice that Baba Rattan Singh and Baba Gurmukh Singh tried to understand and analyse or review the causes and effects of the Ghadr Movement. They expressed their ideas through their articles published in the newspaper – *Majdoor Kissan*, of Amritsar, in 1931.⁶² The common themes of their enquiry were :

- (1) Why did the Ghadr of 1915 fail ?
- (2) How to deal with Non-Violence movement of M.K. Gandhi and what should be done about the feudal Akali elements ?
- (3) What was the real concern of the Ghadr Lehar ? Was it a Revolution? or was it a struggle for political freedom ?

The essays disclosed as to how Ram Chand Peshawria had hurt the Ghadr Movement by acting as a traitor to it. This suffering continued further when the British and the United States administrations suppressed it by their foul means and tactics. The American regime spent a lot of money to get the followers of the Ghadr leadership removed from their political arena through the cultivation of cultural tastes among them.⁶³ The Ghadr did not fail but it suffered from its decline when Gandhi's demand of getting *Swaraj* was accepted and popularized by the well educated Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in the West. Baba Rattan Singh confessed as to how the popularity of Gandhi's views had weakened the Ghadr's social base in America and Canada. In Punjab itself the Indian National Congress dissociated itself from the Ghadr Movement. Likewise the Akalis adopted the Gandhian non-violent means and betrayed the *Babbar*s. As a consequence the peasantry got disillusioned with the *Akali Lehar* that got transformed itself into vest interested political body acceptable to the British.⁶⁴

The Sikhs in United States politically suffered because of chauvinism and factionalism leading to their Majha-Malwa or Malwa-Doaba Divisions. While the Ghadr Organization was trying to overcome this trouble it was betrayed by Raja Mehendra Pratap and his mission to build Ghadr Movement in Tibet and Nepal.⁶⁵ His mission failed so much so that Ghadr organization lost its hope to get success for itself even in China and South-East Asia.

We have already referred to Sohan Singh Josh who wrote three books on the anti-British movements after 1974 and 1977. *History of the Hindustan Ghadr Party* was the second one. However, *Tragedy of the Komagata Maru* was the first book and it was published in 1976. The third book was to deal with 'the role of the Ghadr patriots in the Indian national freedom movement' upto 1947.⁶⁶

61. See, *Majdoor Kisan*, May 01, 08, 15, 24, August 30 and December 1931.

62. See, *Majdoor Kisan*, May 1,8,15,24, August 30, December 13, 1931.

63. For this self-analysis see all the essays published and mentioned above - N.S.

64. Ibid.

65. See, S.S. Josh, Preface, *Hindustan Gadar Party*, op. cit., pp. V-VI.

66. See, Ibid., pp. 91, 158-59, 161-62, 165-67, 172-78, 180-84 and 200-205.

Josh's second book tells how Lala Hardyal had consultations with the following early leaders of the movement in order to get them organized – Bhai Jawala Singh of Thathian (Amritsar), Sant Wasakha Singh Dudehar (Amritsar), Bhai Santokh Singh Dhardeo (Amritsar), Pandit Jagat Ram Hariana (Hoshiarpur), Bhai Roor Singh Chuhan Chak (Ferozepore), Kartar Singh Sarabha (Ludhiana) and some university students.⁶⁷ We are further told that Santokh Singh had earlier been elected as the General Secretary of the Ghadr Party in place of Hardyal. To make the Party a revolutionary organization a secret commission of three members – Sohan Singh Bhakna, Santokh Singh and Kanshi Ram was formed. All the organizers of Ghadr came to India with an exception of Bhai Santokh Singh as mentioned in O'Dwyer's book, *India As I Knew It*.⁶⁸ He along with Bhagwan Singh and others were sent to the Siam front by Ram Chand.

The second volume of Josh on the *History of Hindustan Ghadr Party* discusses how Santokh Singh first went to Shanghai and then to Siam in 1915; from there he was to sent two expeditions – one was to reach the frontier of India via Yunan and second was to penetrate the upper Burma.⁶⁹ Siam was actually governed by the British and it was full of their spies. Even the Germans were not aware of it. Santokh Singh escaped from his arrest, but his reaching Siam-Burma scheme had failed. However, he continued to act as Santokh Singh alias Nihal Singh.⁷⁰

Santokh Singh was prosecuted by the reactionary administration of the United States in league with the British regime through the Indo-German Conspiracy Case popularly known as the San Francisco Conspiracy. Apart from it he was tried in Shanghai for the charge that he had left this only while shifting himself to the far East to establish revolutionary societies there. He was centred in Bangkok. In the San Francisco case he was imprisoned for 21 months and sent to McNeill's Island.⁷¹

Some time in 1927 Miss Smedley came to know that her close co-worker Santokh Singh had reached India and founded the Punjabi monthly *Kirti*. She began to write articles for it. Her important themes were (I) history of the *Ghadr* Movement, (II) freedom movement of India from 1857, (III) the Kuomintang movement in China and its split and (IV) Theaters of Revolutionary Russia.⁷²

The above mentioned interest in Soviet Union was not only confined to Smedley. Santokh Singh was counted as one of those Indians who were involved in Bolshevik or other analogous activities abroad. Undoubtedly he was the first amongst the Indian immigrants to become a communist. He persuaded others to learn Marxism in order to become communists. In fact there were 25 books in his collection in San Francisco including *Capital* in three volumes, *Soul of the Russian*

67. Ibid., pp. 183, 205.

68. Ibid., p. 47.

69. Ibid., p. 27.

70. Ibid., pp. 44-45, 71 and 118.

71. Ibid., p. 118.

72. Ibid.

*Revolution, and Conflict of Celour.*⁷³

Helped by L.C. Wheat, Executive Secretary, Communist Party of America, Santokh Singh and Rattan Singh got clearance or visas to go to Moscow. As a representative of the Ghadr Party Santokh Singh had gone to Russia in January 1923. He attended the Congress of the Third Communist International and met Zinoviev. He had reached Moscow in September 1922. The Congress took place from November 5 to 5 December 1922. Santokh Singh and Rattan Singh left for India in May 1923. Before reaching India Santokh Singh had written letters to the Akali leaders such as Harchand Singh Lyallpuri, Master Tara Singh and Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri.⁷⁴

While returning to India, route taken by Santokh Singh and Rattan Singh was difficult to follow : first they went to Berlin and then left Berlin for Afghanistan via Pershia. By this time Ghadr centre in Kabul was run by Gurmukh Singh and Udham Singh. After some discussions Santokh Singh was advised to go to Punjab. Needless to say that Gurmukh Singh was pro-Teja Singh Swatantar. Gurmukh Singh wanted to send Swatantar once again to Turkey to get military training. Santokh Singh was opposed to this proposal.⁷⁵ While coming back to India Santokh Singh alias Gurdit Singh was arrested at Shakadar and sent to Punjab. Chained and handcuffed, he was brought by police to his village Dhardeo where he was identified by the village people. After the trial he was freed from jail, of course, after two years i.e. in 1925. He too met Bhag Singh Canadian and Karam Singh Chima in Amritsar. They decided to launch a monthly magazine entitled *Kirti*.⁷⁶

Santokh Singh participated in the 40th session of Indian National Congress held in Kanpur in 1925, he also attended there the communist conference. The beginning of *Kirti* was noticed by the press in both Moscow and London. In 1928 *Paravda*, and *London Times* commented upon it and Santokh Singh's attempt to awaken the Punjab peasantry.⁷⁷ Due to his hard work in practice Santokh Singh suffered in his health by 1926-27. Tuberculosis forced him to take rest in a Sikh missionary compound near Khalsa College, but on May 19, 1927 he breath up his last. Thus he expired at the young age of about 35 years. Uptil his end he remained true to his pledge taken in America to serve the motherland – India.⁷⁸

In this research paper, we have dealt with the following aspects and dimensions of the Historiography of Ghadr movement:

To begin with we start with the United States of American variety of History writing inspired the scholars, historians and some other writers too. They depended upon literature produced by the British in India and the West. Before concluding we shall refer to America's own version about the origin and scope of the Ghadr

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid., pp. 220-21.

75. Ibid., p. 223.

76. Ibid., pp. 225-227.

77. Ibid., p. 228.

78. See, Sohan Singh Josh, *Hindustan Ghadr Party*, p. 205.

of 1913. In this particular context Harold's book is very significant though the American Senate made enquiry in 1953 which should not be ignored. We have the second variety of literature produced by the Government of Punjab. It published in the form of Directory of the Ghadr in 1917. The Home Department, Govt. of India too prepared and published *The Ghadr Directory* in 1934⁷⁹ (available in NAI) to supersede the Punjab Directory. These Directories and the Home Department Files are in various branches of the Home Govt. and also in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, but these represent the colonial or British version.

The third kind of Historical work comes from Sohan Singh Josh and the other Indian scholars directly associated with the *Ghadr* movement, central Sikh League and the *Kirti Kissan* Movement. It has been produced by *Desh Bhagat Yaadgar* Committee in the form of its literature. The committee has its own understanding about the evolution of this movement as well as a panel of Historians and Punjabi writers to publish the History and Ideology of the *Ghadr* and Communist Movements in north India.

Fourthly, an attempt has been made to describe the South-Asian perspective of the *Ghadr* activists especially their link with the post opium wars China as well as Afghanistan and Turkey. Our chief sources for this dimension remained *The Ghadr Directory* of 1934 and the writings of Josh.

In our last effort we can refer to Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri and Madhavi Thampi. Lyallpuri has his autobiography *My Life My Times : Journey of A Revolutionary*, published in 2010 by Unistar, Chandigarh.⁸⁰ He refers to the unification of *Kirti Communist Party* with the C.P.I. under Sohan Singh Josh. According to him the *Ghadr* movement had become communist because of the activities of Bhai Rattan Singh Dabba, Santokh Singh, Baba Gurmukh Singh and Udharn Singh Kasel. The first three had reorganized the *Ghadr* Party abroad and also played a role in building the communist movement in India. Lyallpuri himself was active in communist activities from 1943 to 2013 when he expired by the end of May 2013.

Madhavi Thampi has her Presidential Address in the 72nd Session of Indian History Congress held at Punjabi University, Patiala in December 2011. She dealt with the rise of nationalism in China in the early 20th century and this had influenced the Chinese political thinking by basing it upon love for Asia and sense of Asianism and its glory.

We may complete this research paper or academic exercise while referring to the formation and establishment of a group of *Ghadr* in Panama as has been stated in the *Ghadr* Directories of 1916 and 1934. The first Directory says that the following individuals were members of this unit:

Charan Singh, Kishan Singh, Arjun Singh, Rallia Singh, and Gaja Singh.

79. See the title page of *The Ghadr Directory*, 1934 (rpt. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997).

80. See, Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri, *My Life My Times : Journey of A Revolutionary* (Unistar, Chandigarh, 2010), pp. 59-60; 38, 40, 43, 12 and 28.

Unlike the Directory of 1934 it devotes a considerable space to Sardar Harnam Singh Bassi, son of Nagina Singh, a Jat, from Village Bundala, District Jullundar. In 1923 he was arrested and imprisoned for two years. He had been the Editor of the paper *Desh Sewak*. In May 1927 he went to Singhapore and wrote a letter about the *Kirti* Movement to Sohan Singh Josh of Amritsar. In June 1928 he went to Fiji and then to Panama. In October 1931 he wrote a letter to *Mazdoor Kisan Sabha* to denounce the British rule and the peasant loyalty to it. He also wrote a letter to the Editor of *Desh Sewak* advising him that this paper should not deal with religious matters rather devote itself entirely to propaganda work.⁸¹

Reference to Village Bundala, P.O. Nurmahal, District Jullundar, has been made in the same *Directory* in connection with Gulzara singh⁸², and Harbans Singh Bassi⁸³ who had reached the University of California as a student in 1931.

81. See, *The Ghadr Directory 1934*, op. cit. p. 113.

82. Ibid., p. 88.

83. Ibid., p. 101.

RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF GHADARITES AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE GHADAR PARTY

*Swaran Singh Sanehi**

This first humble attempt at the study of religious implications in the Ghadar party may surprise some people as the party now a days is regarded as the monopoly of the people related to the ideology of communism but the religion had been the one major factor in inspiring the ghadarites for national struggle notwithstanding the fact that this aspect has hitherto been suppressed under the burden of the political nature. "We have inadequately given thought to the fact that the basic beginning of the culture of the Ghadar party is related to the sacred writings of the Gurus, saints and Bhai Gurdas and that its last end merges into the progressive and epic poetry and the modern fiction writings. The Ghadar culture therefore must not be regarded as utterly a new one..."¹

The post annexation period is regarded as the period of decadence of Punjab as the consolidation of the British rule in Punjab by then was followed by the export of the wealth from the Punjab to England while in return the poverty was imported to roam in the *bazars* here. In such a predicament, "Baba Ram Singh (founder of the Kuka Movement) was the first to critically examine the prevailing situation; not only examined but he cautioned the people of the province and advised them to lead simple life based on coarse food and clothing."²

The eminent historian Majumdar has written in the context of the revolutionary movements of Bengal that "the movement was initiated by the anti-British activities of two different groups—Hindu *sanyasis* and Muslim *Faqirs*, but they gained momentum from the support they received from the starving peasantry, dispossessed *zamindars* and the disbanded soldiers."³ It very pertinently applies to almost all other such movements. Dr. Gokalchand Narang has quoted the German Emperor, William Kaiser as having said that all the religious movements are political ones.⁴ This otherwise may mean that the political movements are religious at least in the beginning.

The Ghadar party was preceded by the Namdhari or the Kuka movement in Punjab in nineteenth century. An English daily had regarded the Kukas as the

*V.&P.O. Shahpur, Via Phillaur, Distt. Jalandhar.

1. Kesar Singh ed., *Ghadar Lehar di Kavita*, Patiala, 1985, p.48.
2. Jaswant Singh, *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna*, Jalandhar, 1973, p. 21.
3. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Freedom Movement of India*, Calcutta, 1971, p. 116.
4. Gokalchand Narang, *Transformation of the Sikhs*, Lahore, 1945, p. 26.

Puritans of the Sikhs.⁵ A group of American historians believed that "the Puritans represented the torch bearers of religious liberty and political freedom—brave pioneers who contributed significantly to the formation of American democracy."⁶ "Such puritanical movements were thus double edged heroically anti-British at times, they could also contribute to internal conflicts. An almost exact parallel here would be the Kuka sect among the Sikhs."⁷

The Encyclopaedia Britannica has put the Kukas among the religious revivalists⁸ but this movement too soon acquired political character which became the immediate concern for the government. As a matter of fact, the revival movement paves the way for its revolutionary counterpart. This theory applies to at least such movements of Bengal and Punjab. The letter addressed by the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab to the Government of India specifically observed such a transformation of the Kuka movement "that the papers, which have been submitted to the Government of India, show that whatever the original tendency of the Kuka doctrine may have been, they have now become a political character, the designs of the leaders, more or less understood by the followers, being to attempt of a restoration of the Sikh power in the Punjab.. There is in addition, the unanimous belief among loyal and intelligent natives, that the Kuka movement is one which the Government cannot afford to treat with indifference, the conduct and bearing of the Kukas themselves and the prophecies current among them of the near approach of the time when the English would be expelled from the country, and followers of Guru Ram Singh receive lands and honours."⁹

The last decades of the nineteenth and the beginning ones of the twentieth century are regarded as the period of revivalism in India. "In an age of orthodox and revivalist Hinduism when the influence of religion and spiritualism among the revolutionaries in Bengal had reached its apex under Aurobindo Ghose and sister Nivedita, there existed 'a dissident, secular and even anti-religious trend' led by Hemchandra Kanungo and there were debates within revolutionary circles about role of religion..."¹⁰

Aurobindo Ghose too was a religious leader in Bengal who had established a revolutionary organization where the would be revolutionaries were practically trained to face the inhuman treatments and tortures given by the government to the revolutionaries. He had roused the politically slumbering Bengalis. After leaving Punjab, Shri Munsha Singh Dukhi too had joined his organization though he had already been inspired by the hair raising stories of martyrs in Sikh history which he had inherited from the Sikh parents.¹¹ The Gadharites used the example of

5. *Daily Madras Times*, Madras, dated 26.1.1872.

6. Gerarld, Barrier ed., *From Puritanism to the First Party System*, New York, 1972, p. 24.

7. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, p. 78.

8. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1965 edn.

9. Home Deptt. Judl. A, February 1872, no. 7-20.

10. Harish Puri, *Gadar Movement : Ideology, Organisation and Strategy*, Amritsar, 1983, p. 5.

11. S.S. Sanahi, *Munsha Singh Dukhi*, (Monograph), Patiala, 1990, p. 8.

Aurobindo to stimulate their compatriots assuring them that the Bengali revolutionaries would assist them on the occasion of revolution.¹² As a matter of fact almost every revolutionary movement, be it that of the Sanyasis, or Wahabis, or Satnamis or of Namdharis had been founded by some religious leader or these owed their origin to some religion or had some religious element in them.

The founders of the Ghadar party in San Francisco (USA) were mostly the immigrant Punjabi peasants and artisans, forced by the poverty incurred by the new British administrative policies and heavy taxation, migrated to the foreign countries in search of green pastures. The USA and Canada were independent countries the atmosphere of which infused these migrants to rise against the British for liberating their mother land. It ultimately resulted in the formation of the Asia Pacific Society in April 1913 which was later on nicknamed after the name of the periodical *The Ghadar* which was launched with a view to educate the ignoramus with the help of facts and figures disclosing as to how the British were fleecing India and bleeding it to white.

The members of the Ghadar party hailed from such families which believed in one religion or the other. It would therefore be incorrect to label them as secular but they were not so bigots, thus, never allowing their personal belief to interfere in their national struggle. Our diligent perusal find many such Ghadarites who staunchly believed in religion, did their meditations, used to read the sacred writings and perform their religious schedules even in jails strictly following their religious postulates. Examples of Bhai Randhir Singh of Narangwal (Ludhiana) and his associates who were punished as Ghadarites and subjected to various punishments used to meditate, read the sacred writings, to sing the sacred hymns collectively in jail.¹³ Many other names may be added to this list such as of Bhai Karam Singh Daulatpur,¹⁴ Sant Teja Singh of Harvard University who preached to remove the stigma of helping the British in 1857, Sant Vaisakha Singh of Dadehar, Mewa Singh of Lopoke, and Hafiz Abdulla, who presided over the party centre at Manila in Phillipines.

The majority of the Ghadarites were from Punjab and were Sikhs. They were inspired by the scriptural writings pertaining to bravery, dignified death and to fight the enemy tooth and nail in the battle-field. They were equally impressed by the heroic deeds and inspired by the epic compositions of the tenth Guru Gobind Singh. As a matter of fact, one of the three things the Ghadar movement wielded as weapons was religion.¹⁵

The revolutionaries who took the initiative of founding and joining the Ghadar party were mostly religious minded. Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, the founder President of the Ghadar party was himself a Namdhari, influenced by a saintly person Baba Kesar Singh of Mohawa in Amritsar district¹⁶ who himself had been

12. *Ghadar di Goonj*, No.1, San Francisco, USA, 1931.

13. Bhai Randhir Singh, *Jail Chithian*, vol.III, Amritsar, 1938.

14. Kesar Singh ed., *Ghadar Lehar di Kavita*, Patiala, 1995, p. 441.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

16. Sohan Singh Bhakna, *Jiwan Sangram*, Jullundur, 1968, p. 22.

a devoted Namdhari and politically awakened person.¹⁷ Baba Bhakna owed his religious leaning and politico-national outlook to Baba Kesar Singh.

The Ghadar party used the religions of various communities to rouse the people against the British reminding them of the demolition of their respective shrines by the British. Sikhs for instance were reminded of the demolished wall of Gurdwara Rakabganj Delhi, Muslims were reminded of their earlier rule and power grabbed by the British or the demolition of a mosque at Kanpur and condemned the Government for opposing the caliphate of Turkey.¹⁸

The majority of the people who joined the party were Punjabis and Sikhs. They therefore thought of erecting their temples called Gurdwaras to fulfil their religious obligations which could also provide them some meeting facilities. The double storey Gurdwara at Vancouver was inaugurated on 19-1-1908. Which became the centre of the Indian revolutionary movement. It was a point of unity of Indians where they were provided the facility of meeting and discussing the matters of common interests and of taking decisions thereon.¹⁹ "It was used by all Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs for political gatherings. It housed the offices of United India League and Khalsa Diwan Society."²⁰ Besides the Gurdwara at Shinghai became notorious during the movement. The Gurdwara at Hong Kong became some sort of centre of the ghadarites because all the ships were routed through it and the passengers had to change their ships at this port. The Kama Gata Maru transaction did also originate at this Gurdwara.²¹ It was followed by the building of the Gurdwaras at Victoria, Abtreford and some other localities.

The Ghadar party utilized the religion in various forms which may be studied under the following sub titles:

Use of the shrines :

The Ghadar party availed every opportunity offered by the Gurdwaras and religious occasions, rites and ceremonies to rouse the people against the British. Its meetings were held in Gurdwara premises. Open religio-political lectures were delivered in the hall while the basement of these shrines were used for revolutionary deliberations.²² It may be interesting to note that the majority of the Gurdwaras abroad facilitated the furthering of the common cause while in Punjab only a few of them or their custodians co-operated with revolutionaries, as the majority of the clergy and Sikh chiefs had become loyal to the new rulers. Gurdwara at Jhar Sahib in Amritsar district remained conspicuous for its positive vital role. It was here that decision was taken and date of the revolution, 26 of November, was fixed.

17. Nidhan Singh Alam, 'Baba Kesar Singh', *Satjug*, special issue on Saints, 9 Chetra, 1996, p. 113.

18. G.S. Sahinsra, *Ghadar Party da Itihas*, Jullundur, p. 1969, p. 184.

19. Ibid., p. 73.

20. Kesar Singh, op cit, p. 35.

21. G.S. Sahinsra, op cit, p. 128.

22. S.S. Sanehi, *Dukhi*, p. 9.

Services of the clergy:

The services of the Sikh clergy were fully availed of. Bhai Bhagwan Singh, who was chased by Hopkinson, was basically a *Granthi* (reader of the Holy *Granth*) who used to condemn the British and used to preach forcefully, punctuating his political speeches with the quotations from the sacred writings of Guru Gobind Singh.²³ He was forcibly packed out of Canada only for this 'crime'. His deportation had added fuel to the fire among the Punjabis there. Bhai Balwant Singh of Khuradpur in Jalandhar district was also a *Granthi* who had played a significant role in stimulating the people against the British, particularly during his stay in Punjab enroute from England to Canada. He had been most instrumental in Koma Gata Maru affairs.

Use of the religious ceremonies: *Akhand Paths* :

The non stop recitation of the Holy *Granth* is the most important religious ceremony in Sikhs. It is regarded as an auspicious occasion at which the relatives of the host are collected and many a times the gathering becomes extra ordinarily large. The Ghadarites used to avail this opportunity as well. Bhai Randhir Singh was known to utilize such occasions. The provocative speeches made by his associates have become part of the official records.²⁴

Examples of religious revolutionaries:

The examples of religious revolutionaries were also resorted to for rousing the politically slothful people. Guru Gobind Singh is regarded the first Sikh Guru to convert his followers into hawks by giving the political philosophy which had utterly transformed them. Three of his ideas suited and therefore were adopted and propagated by the Ghadarites. Even Bhagat Singh was influenced by the philosophy of the tenth Guru and had quoted him in his famous deposition given during his trial in the court.

The first idea was concerning to fight unto one's last when the death is certain for the cause. The stanza composed by the Guru in this context is repeatedly quoted by every writer while discussing the fighting in the battlefield. The second idea pertained to the use of the weapons eventually when all other efforts had failed.²⁵ The Ghadarites were of the view that the peaceful and non-violent means have failed in Indians' struggle for freedom. It convinced them for an armed revolution and this idea is found in almost all the writings including poetry composed by the Ghadarites. Some poets went to the extent of tainting their Sikh brethren for being Sikh but shirking from performing a Sikh cause of bravery? "Why they were shirking of taking the double-edged sword in their hands?" They exhorted to die a brave death after struggling against the enemy. They also talk of ousting the British by thrashing with shoes.²⁶

23. Home Deptt, Pol. A, October, 1915, No. 91.

24. G.S. Sahinsra, op cit., p. 191.

25. Guru Gobind Singh, *Zafar Nama*.

26. *Ghadar di Goonj*, no.1, op. cit.

The third one was regarding the treatment to be meted out to those who remain uncooperative with the revolutionaries or had turned approvers, traitors or police informers. Guru Gobind Singh himself had set the example by pushing those out of Anandpur who had not fought in his battle at Bhangani.²⁷ The Ghadarites too adopted this line to deal squarely with informers or traitors etc. They started attacking, murdering or punishing such persons so much so that the Ghadarite poets asked the revolutionaries to get rid of such black sheep first of all.

Namdharis or the Kukas were the first in Punjab to raise their head against the British rulers within two decades of annexation of the province to the British India in March 1849, at such a time when nobody dared uttering a word against the new rulers. They had raised a slogan in February 1869 of "Dismantle your cantonments from Punjab as the Khalsa is to rule." As a consequence of the events that took place during 1871 and 1872, the Namdharis were hanged at different times at various places and blown away from cannon on 17-18 January 1872 at the Parade Grounds of Malerkotla. The sacrifices made by them still remain unsurpassed. These inspired the Ghadarites for sacrifices for a national cause. "But the Kuka movement left a significant stamp on the outlook of the people of the Punjab," observes Dr. Fauja Singh, "Some of the Ghadar leaders, like Sohan Singh Bhakna, were inspired by the glorious sacrifices of the Kukas or Namdhari Sikhs." The Ghadarites quoted them in the *Ghadar* paper and later on in the collection of poetry entitled as *Ghadar Di Goonj* (echo of the revolution). One such editorial comments said:

"Baba Ram Singh deported to Andamans (though it was incorrect due to the secrecy maintained by the officials regarding the place of confinement of Guru Ram Singh), and the Kuka brave men blown away from cannon mouths. Tell us now what to do? Are we to die by getting hit by the feet of the Englishmen? Are you still enjoying the life? Let us embrace martyrdom!"²⁸

Historic incidents at Shrines:

Some incidents that influenced the proceedings and programs of the Party did also take place in the Gurdwaras, and were equally related to the sanctity or sacrilege of the shrines as, for instance, the sudden firing by Bela Singh at the Gurdwara at Vancouver when Bhai Bhag Singh Bhikhi was in the attendance of the Holy *Granth Sahib*.²⁹ It proved to be a turning point in the history of the party there as it led to the murder of Hopkinson, transformation of nature of Bhai Mewa Singh to that of a saintly person and his execution in January 1915.

The religious fairs:

The gathering at such fairs is found comparatively larger. The Ghadarites tried their best to avail this opportunity fully well. The birth anniversary of Guru

27. Guru Gobind Singh, *Vichitra Nataka*.

28. Editor's appeal in *Ghadar di Goonj*, no.1.

29. G.S. Sahinsra, op. cit., p. 85.

Nanak Dev, celebrated at his birth place Nankana Sahib has its peculiar importance. Several thousand people from all walks of life used to throng the fair. The leaders of the Ghadar party visited this fair to convey their message to the people collected there and to prepare them for the revolution. A group of such leaders had visited the said fair on 2 November 1914 too. Similarly, a monthly religious fair at Tarn Taran was held where people participated in large numbers. The members of the party availed of that opportunity too.

Use of musical instruments:

The small drum and harmonium is usually used for singing the sacred hymns. The Ghadarites had devised a spontaneous use of these instruments to escape the arrests. It was decided that as part of the revolution in Punjab, Bhai Randhir Singh and his followers would attack the cantonment at Ferozepur. Some members of the Ghadar party, including Kartar Singh Sarabha, Ishar Singh Dhudike, Gandha Singh Kachar Bhann etc. and about 50-60 followers of Bhai Randhir Singh disembarked the train at night of 19 February for the purpose. They were marching towards the military area when they were stopped and questioned by the policeman on duty. These people had harmonium and the drum with them. At the spur of the moment they told the policeman that they were religious musicians and were going to solemnize a marriage ceremony. Thus they escaped the arrests.³⁰

Disguise:

The Ghadarites at times disguised as mendicant and thus enjoyed the freedom in moving place to place in pursuance of their goal of propagating the ideal of the revolution. Vishnu Ganesh Pingle had ventured to travel almost all over India in the garb of *faqir*.

Religious Perversion and Ghadar:

The abuse of the religion by the Sikhs at the latent instance of the British officials proved fatal to the plan of the revolution. The clergy and the Chiefs who had become loyal tried their best to oppose the movement at all costs. The clergy or the custodians of the Sikh shrines issued the religious edict against the patriots and revolutionaries related to both the Ghadar movement and the Kama Gata Maru episode. The afflicted passengers of the Kama Gata Maru ship were declared non-Sikhs because they had 'revolted' against the British government.

Similar treatment was meted out earlier to the Namdharis for the same reason. "We the undersigned Sikhs of all classes of Amritsar, beg unanimously submit that we have no connection or sympathy whatever with the Kuka Sect, which has recently become notorious. On the contrary, we greatly differ from them on most religious principles. We are happy, that the government has adopted most appropriate and excellent measures for controlling this wicked and misguided sect, especially as the measures in question are calculated to deter ill disposed people from committing mischief in future....Moreover, the Kukas do not differ

30. Ibid., p. 213.

from us in religious principles only, but they may be said to be our mortal enemies. Since by their misconduct and evil designs, they injured our honour in the estimation of the government, and well-nigh leveled with the dust, the services performed in 1857, through which we were regarded as well-wishers and loyal subjects by the government....”³¹

Thus, we see that the religion had been a vital factor in the development of the strategy of the Ghadar party. It would not be an exaggeration if we say that a major part of the strategy was planned at Sikh shrines. Had there been no religious moral and physical support, the party might have not become so popular in such a short time and at such a large scale and having such dare-devil recruits.

31. Address presented by Sikhs at Amritsar to the Lt.Governor,Punjab,on 22.3.1872.

GHADR PARTY: IDEOLOGY AND ACTIVITIES

*Buta Singh Sekhon**

This paper has two main objectives, firstly to present the facts about the activities of the *Ghadr* party and the interest it displayed in connection with agrarian problems; particularly and secondly, to measure the strength of each organization in the province. The paper is divided into two sections, section one deals with the activities of the *Ghadr* group. References have also been made to the part played by other political factions in the agrarian agitation in the province. Section two covers the development of party-politics and its involvement in political scenario in this region of the country. Attempt has also been made to highlight its impact on the rural masses in particular.

We are concerned about *Ghadr* party only to the extent it contributed to the formation and growth of the *Kirti Kisan* movement in the province. Although, the *Kirti Kisan* party was not merely an extension of the *Ghadr* Group¹, it owed much of its initial impetus to the *Ghadr* Group in the United States. The idea of the formation of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party originated with the *Ghadr* Group.² In the party meeting held towards the end of 1922, it was decided to send Bhai Santokh Singh and Bhai Rattan Singh to India for organizing workers and peasants. Both the leaders entered into India in May 1923 but they were arrested in the tribal territory of the North Western Frontier Province and released on security towards the end of the year. Now Bhai Santokh Singh, who had stayed back in India, got in touch with the radical minded workers of Amritsar, Lahore and Dhariwal. As a result of his efforts the plan of organizing workers and peasants in the Punjab took shape.

The presence and an active participation of Bhag Singh 'Canadian' a Ghadr emissary at the first meeting of the Punjab Workers' and Peasants' Party on April 12, 1927³ indicated the earnest desire of the *Ghadr* Group to establish link with the radical minded workers in the Punjab. The *Kirti Kisan* Party was formed with the primary object of organizing workers and peasants. The immediate aim of the party was to accomplish a thorough democratization of India⁴, leading to political,

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1. Williamson, H., *Communism in India - 1935* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department : Government of India revised up to 1935), 271.
2. Home Department File No.233/II/1936, 26; Williamson, H., *Communism in India - 1935*, 261 (Also see Section II of this thesis).
3. Meerut Conspiracy Case Sessions Judgement, 1930, Vol.I, Pt. XXIX, 594, NAI, New Delhi.
4. Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers: Sr. No.167, Exhibit No. P.344(T), 771-Aims & Objects and Rules and Regulations of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party; Also Sr. No.19, Vol.XIV, Joint Statement of Nimbkar, A.S. and Others, 4892.

economic and social emancipation of the masses.⁵

It is a fact that the *Kirti Kisan* leadership had grasped the anti imperialistic ideas and absorbed the militant spirit of the *Ghadr* Group in abundant measure. However, it may be stated that the strategy of the *Kirti Kisan* Party was to mount a simultaneous offensive against imperialism as well as revolutionary nationalist groups as the *Babbar Akalis*.

In the late 1920's *Ghadrites* had come under the influence of the economic and social theories of Marx; they began to look upon the British Government as something more than a predatory organization maintained by coercion and terrorism.⁶ If it was to perform its bourgeois democratic task i.e. the overthrow of imperialism, the abolition of landlordism etc., it must fight not only imperialism and landlord class but the bourgeois as well.⁷ The same task was adopted by the workers' and peasants' movement. But it should be clear here that the *Ghadr* leaders disapproved individual terrorism, because it had very little social significance.⁸ However, they did not, in principle, condemn the assassination of public officials. The urgency of dealing with the traitors and informers, who obstructed the progress of the *Ghadr* Movement at every step, compelled the *Ghadr* leadership to revise their views. Various aspects of this problem were discussed at length in a number of articles, published in the paper *Ghadr*.⁹

Concentration on the elimination of sycophants and traitors practically consumed energies of the members and resource of the *Ghadr* Party. It may be pointed out that the problem of dealing with the *Jholichuks* (loyalists), which had assumed gravity and urgency for the *Ghadrites* did not figure in the program of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party. The *Kirti Kisan* Party contemplated and prepared itself for the use of force for bringing about national revolution and disbanding reactionary elements.¹⁰ In short, the *Ghadr* Party had chosen the method of armed rebellion.¹¹ As opposed to the *Ghadr* Party methods, organization of peasants' and workers' was the watchword of the policy of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party, it had a two fold strategy: mass movements on the one hand and red terrorism on the other.

The Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party owed special debt to the *Ghadr* Group for its role in founding the *Kirti*, a journal in *Punjabee*, designing the party's pattern of growth and guiding its policy. Expertise of Bhag Singh 'Canadian' and Bhai Santokh

5. Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers, Sr. No.167, Exhibit No. P.344(T), 771; also Sr. No.161, Exhibit No.549(15), 922-26.

6. The Bulletin (San Francisco), October 20, 1913, Quoted in Brown, Emily C., *Hardayal : Hindu Revolutionary and Nationalist* (New Delhi : 1976), 142.

7. Joint Statement of Nimbkar and others, 5415, Latila, Kartar Singh, 'Kirti-di-Unati-de-Sadhan', published in the *Kirti* (Amritsar), September : 1927, 27.

8. Quoted in Brown, Emily C., *Hardayal : Hindu Revolutionary and Nationalist*, 160-61.

9. Ibid., 146 (For details see the *Ghadr* of November 29, 1918).

10. Joint Statement of Nimbkar, R.S. and Others.

11. Bala, Shastri Hardas, *Armed Struggle for Freedom, Ninety Years of Independence*, translated by S.S. Apte (Poona Kal Prakashan : 1958), 252-53 (Hardas quotes at large from Khan Khoje's Diary which recorded the details about the *Ghadr* plan of action).

Singh in the *Ghadr* techniques of propaganda was an asset for the *Kirti Kisan* agitation in the province. Realizing the importance of propaganda in organizing the workers and peasants on the basis of economic principles¹² Santokh Singh publicized the principle of Socialism and created class consciousness among its readers.¹³

The *Kirti* fulfilled its role of changing public opinion. It exhorted its readers to give a befitting reply to the official repression by promoting its sale and thus contribute towards the campaign for revolution.¹⁴ It was similar to the appeal which appeared in the *Ghadr* of November 8, 1913.¹⁵ Being the potential precursors and vanguard of revolution,¹⁶ they were the most suitable recipients of the *Kirti's* message of socialism, class struggle, freedom of the press and complete independence.¹⁷ Above all, the main theme of fighting against the British imperialism and capitalism remained the focus.¹⁸ Being fully appreciative of the contribution of the *Ghadr* Group, the *Kirti* ever since its appearance in 1926, followed the consistent policy of expounding their ideas of egalitarianism and complete independence.¹⁹ Publication of autobiographies, biographies and photographs of *Ghadrites* continued to inspire the readers of the *Kirti*.²⁰ Even after the death of its founder, there was no change in the policy of the *Kirti*. It remained an effective medium of propaganda and instruction for the potential militant nationalists. It advised them to avoid lapses in the *Ghadr* plan of action and to strengthen mass organization.

The *Kirti* also got financial help from the *Ghadr* Group when it was in danger of being forced to suspend its publication.²¹ It was significant to note, while the *Kirti* fought the battle in India itself, its editors kept in close touch with the *Ghadr* Party in the United States. It served as an effective channel of communication between the *Ghadr* Group and the Punjab *Kirti Kisan* Party. A letter dated June 1, 1927, published in the *Kirti*. A latter Group had helped the organizers of the *Kirti* in the formation of its policy. While this particular letter had hailed its inception and acclaimed its mission of creating awakening among the *Kirtis*, it emphasized the need of organizing and enlisting the support of large numbers of peasants in the Punjab whose needs and potentialities had so far been

12. *The Kirti* (Amritsar), July, 1927, 13-15; also of June, 1929, 17-19.

13. *The Kirti*, April, 1929 (Mahatma Karl Marx), 7; also of May, 1929 (Comrade Karl Marx), 56-63.

14. *The Kirti*, 'Firanghi Shahi Da Takhta Dol Giya', December, 1929, 1-2.

15. Karr, J.C., *Political Trouble in India. 1907-17* (Indian reprint, Calcutta : 1973), 173.

16. *The Kirti* (Amritsar), December, 1929, 1-2 (Meerut Jail Wich Dake do Kirti Aguan da Zabani Suncha).

17. *The Kirti* (Amritsar), August, 1929, 50 (Kirti Lehr Nahin Dabegi) 126-27.

18. *The Kirti* (May Day), May, 1929, 5.

19. *The Kirti* (1914-15 de Shahidan Ton Sikhia), May, 1929, 7-8.

20. *The Kirti*, March, 1930, 43-52.

21. Home Department, File No.44/36-1934 - Political (Statement of Harjap Singh - A member of the Hindustan *Ghadr* Party). 4; also File No.6/10/1928, 39, NAI : New Delhi; For details also see File No.235/II/1926, 30; *The Kirti*, February, 1926, 77-78; March, 1926; July, 1926, 20.

ignored. It further stressed the need of widening the scope of the program of the *Kirti Kisan Party* so as to include the benefits and privileges the peasantry would obtain in a free India of the future. This party had surely realized the value of their advice, for its leaders and its mouthpiece, the *Kirti*, proclaimed that the success of the freedom struggle depended upon the extent of involvement of the *Kirtis* and *Kisans*.²²

Redesigning of the *Kirti* and modification of its motto, in response to the suggestion of some important leaders of the *Ghadr Group*,²³ and to the favourable reaction of the working class readers in Europe and other countries as well as the immediate implementation of their suggestions, further indicated the extent of its ideological appeal.

The *Kirti* of August, 1927, carried an appeal from the *Ghadr Party* to the Chinese nationalists to guard their right of asylum by protecting Dasaundha Singh, from being arrested.²⁴ The writings of Harjap Singh notably "Lenin and *Kisan*", "Hindustan and Terrorism"²⁵ and "Arrest of Santa Singh at Madras",²⁶ in this magazine highlighted the different faces of the *Kirti Kisan* movement in the Punjab and its ideological stand on various issues such as the official policy of arresting the *Ghadr*ite emissaries in India, etc. The members of the *Ghadr Group* valued highly the work done by the *Kirti* for the dissemination of anti-imperialistic and anti-capitalistic ideas. Rattan Singh visited India second time in August 1927 with the specific purpose of assessing the role of the *Kirti Group* in the country.²⁷ Similarly Harjap Singh visited India in 1930²⁸ with the aim of helping the growth of the '*Kirti Lehr*' in the Punjab.²⁹ In the course of his stay in India, his concentrated efforts for the renewal of contracts with the returned emigrants helped in increasing the number of active workers of the *Kirti Kisan* struggle in the Punjab. Besides, he, alive to the need of being conversant with the growth of the *Naujawan* as well as the Congress movements, attended their respective sessions, which coincided with those of the All India *Kirti Kisan Party* at Karachi in March, 1931.

To sum up, from 1926 onward, the *Ghadr group* had shown a good deal of initiative in spearheading the movement for organizing peasants and workers in the province. Their activities were especially noticeable in connection with the founding of the *Kirti*, its growth and sustenance. Their contribution to the rise and expansion of the *Kirti Kisan* movement in the Punjab was not limited to their successful early efforts for the formation of the Punjab *Kirti Kisan party* in April,

22. *The Kirti*, (Amritsar), 'Zamindar Sabha', February, 1928, 77-78; *The Kirti*, March, 1930, (Brij Narain's 'Zamindar Te Kisan'), 16-19.

23. Home Department, File No.44/26/1934, 15, 18; *The Kirti*, July, 1927, 50.

24. *The Kirti* (Amritsar), August, 1927 (Dasaunda Singh was an Indian National in China).

25. For details see *The Kirti* (Amritsar), February, 1930, 3-13.

26. Home Department, File No.44/36/1934, 14. (Its text is not traceable).

27. Patric, D., *Communism in India, 1924-27* (Compiled in the intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India), 263.

28. Home Department, File No.44/36/1934, 15, 18.

29. *Ibid.*, 16.

1927. Association of Bhag Singh 'Canadian' with the *Kirti Kisan* organization exercised a decisive influence in the evolution of its ideology. It accounted for its devotion to the *Ghadrite* ideals of equality and the example of their fight against national bondage, injustice and inequality - social, economic and political - enabled the *Kirti Kisan* Party to evolve their own genre of militant nationalism. Mass action was given priority and terrorism was put aside as the last resort to be used against the imperialists and reactionaries.

In the later half of 1930's, when the party embarked upon its programme of action, the *Ghadr* emissaries had, perforce, to perform the role of mentors.³⁰ Another reason for the gradual eclipse of their influence was the increasing indifference of the Communist International to the workers' and peasants parties in India; the *Ghadrite* emissaries, who had trusted the Communist International as a guide, felt bewildered over its change of policy. Furthermore, forcible cessation of the publication of the *Kirti*, the stronghold of the *Ghadr* Group, eroded their control over the peasants' and workers' movement in the province of Punjab. Moreover, the emphasis shifted to peasants' agitation from 1935 to 1939 and this agitation threw up new leaders known as '*Babas*', during this period.

It will not be out of place if some more facts about the *Ghadr* Group in connection with the freedom struggle are cited here. There existed a significant difference between the Friends of Freedom for India League and the *Ghadr* party. It was that the League was ready to accept the help of Russia, but it would not tolerate any Communist propaganda while the latter was in favour of Communist work.³¹ The *Ghadrites* were convinced that the British rule could only be overthrown with the help of arms and there was no other possible way to do so. They had already reached the conclusion that the failure of the *Ghadr* movement in 1915 was due to the mistake of not carrying the masses, particularly the workers and peasants, along with them. Despite its failure, the formation of the *Ghadr* Group was credited to have produced the greatest political change as it had come up with the purpose of destroying the British in India and establishing a peoples' Government instead,³² this aspect has already been discussed.

It is also not out of place to state that the *Ghadrites* were mostly the sons of the families with small proprietary holdings who, because of economic distress and pressure, went to the U.S.A. to work as labourers so that they could improve their living conditions.³³ It is significant to state that the Punjab *Ghadrites* were

30. The important among them such as Santokh Singh, Bhag Singh 'Canadian', Rattan Singh 'American' and Harjap Singh were either dead or behind the bars.

31. File No.1929, Part-I, 1920 - Indian Office Library (Archives on Contemporary History of India, J.N.U., New Delhi).

32. Home Department, File No.9-B, 1921, NAI, New Delhi.

33. They were peasants as well as workers. They organised themselves to defend the rights of the workers. In India they sought to organise the peasants while sympathising with the labour class.

maintaining links with the third international organization through Rattan Singh.³⁴ The information which is available prove that Rattan Singh was collaborating with the Communist International.³⁵ In March 1926, a batch of five *Ghadrites* left for Russia to be trained in Communist propaganda.³⁶ They maintained contact with the *Kirti* in the Punjab through Kabul Centre. Another important fact which is to be noted is, the *Kirti* also tried to maintain its links with the Red Peasants' International, and the League against Imperialism.³⁷

Going through documents, we get the impression that there were different groups within the *Ghadr* Party which had links with different circles (factions) in Punjab who were preaching militant nationalism through militant papers like - '*Desh Sewak*', '*Akali-te-Pardesi*' and the '*Punjabee*'.³⁸ Though the *Ghadr* Group and various emigrant societies were sending money to all these papers. Only the *Kirti* emphasized the Communist ideas and ideology. It is to be noted that the members of the *Naujawan Bharat Sabha* derived inspiration from the courage, self-sacrifice and dedication of the *Ghadr* heroes.³⁹

To what extent the *Ghadr* Group had succeeded⁴⁰ in propagating the leftist ideology is yet to be answered. This aspect may be discussed in two other separate papers under two heads- the *Akalis* and the Communists. However, it is clear from the above stated facts that the *Ghadrites* and their leadership not only propagated the leftist ideology, rather they successfully involved the masses (rural masses in particular) in large in the arena of freedom struggle.

34. Petric, David, *Communism in India : 1924-27* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India), 83-87; Williamson, H., *Communism in India : 1935* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India issue upto 1935), 20.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Petric, David, *Communism in India : 1924-27* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India), 83-87; Williamson, H., *Communism In India : 1935* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India issued upto 1935), 20.

38. For details see Adhikari, G., *Documents of History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol.I, 8; Home Department File No.235/II-1926; Kaye, Sir Cecil, *Communism in India : unpublished documents from NAI, 1919-24*, ed. by Subodh Rai (Calcutta : 1971), 167.

39. For ideological evolution of its leaders see Ghosh, Ajoy, *Article and speeches*, Moscow : 1962; Chandra, Bipan, "The Ideological Development of the Revolutionary Terrorists in Northern India in the 1920", in *Socialism in India*, edited by Nanda, B.R. 1972; Josh, Sohan Singh, *Hindustan Ghadr Party*, P.P.H., Delhi : 1977, 17.

40. For its success or failure see Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II, 183; Josh, Sohan Singh *Hindustan Ghadr Party PPH : Delhi - 1977*, 32.

GHADAR REBELLION IN PUNJAB & LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE 1914-1915

*Kuldeep Singh**

In March 1913 a conference was called at Washington and invitations were sent to Indians living in various parts of Canada and U.S.A. The organizers of this conference were Sohan Singh Bhakna, Wasakha Singh, Jawala Singh, Kartar Singh Sarabha, and Lala Hardyal. Hardyal had toured the Pacific Coast and was able to get the supports of Khalsa Dewan Society Stockton, Hindustan Association of British Columbia and Vancouver United India League. About two hundred delegates attended this conference and Hindi Pacific Coast Association was founded with Sohan Singh Bhakna as its President, Baba Kesar Singh, Vice President, Lala Hardyal, Secretary and Pandit Kashi Ram, as a Treasurer. The aim was the liberation of India from the foreign yoke and if necessary by force of arms. Headquarters of the party was set up at San Francisco, as it was considered most suitable place to keep in touch with the Indian revolutionaries in other countries. The Resolution was passed to start a paper. The site of press and its office was set up at Yuganter Ashram and the paper was named *Ghadar*, the source of inspiration was *Ghadar* of 1857. First issue of *Ghadar* was published on 1, November, 1913 in Urdu, Gurmukhi and Gujarati. Besides this Yuganter Ashran published following pamphlets¹:-

Ghadar di Gunj (Echo of Mutiny) was written in Gurmukhi and was particularly addressed to the Sikh community. Another pamphlet *Ilan-i-Jang*. (Declaration of War) was published in Urdu. It gave graphic picture of India's slavery by bringing out economic exploitation by the British.

Another pamphlet *Nia Zamana* (New Era) began with the praise of Tilak and other revolutionaries. It appealed to serve the Mother India and to all Indians. Salvation of India was to be fulfilled in obtaining liberty, and equality for all. The fourth pamphlet was "*Balance Sheet of rule in India*". It included various issues. Such as Famines and plagues which occurred in India had destruction of the Indian Handicraft and Industry. It also deals with the sacrifices done by Indians for the sake of British conquest in Burma, Afghanistan and China².

There occurred a few incidents which favoured the popularity of the doctrine of revolution. One such event was the deportation of Bhai Bhagwan Singh, the

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1. Puri, Harish Kumar, *Ghadar Movement : Ideology, Organization and Strategies*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1979, p.10
2. Paper and Tract Published by Ghadar Press, San Francisco, 1913, p. 5.

Granthi of Vancouver Gurdwara³. Bhai Bhagwan Singh was very enthusiastic revolutionary. In his lectures he used to criticise the misdeeds of home Government. He was a poet and recited his poems which preached armed rebellion against tyranny and oppression of Indians. Within short time he became one of the most popular figures. But immigration department got him arrested on some technical ground and sent him back to Hong Kong. This brought resentment among the Indians living in Canada and America⁴.

In May 1914 the venture of *Kamagata Maru* shocked the Indians living in foreign countries. The ordinance of Canadian Government which empowered the Immigration authorities to prohibit the entrance of any Asian into Canada unless he come from the country of his origin by direct voyage, and was able to produce 200 dollars. There were no ships by which Indians could go direct. In order to meet emigration authorities' technical objection, Baba Gurdit Singh assisted by S. Daljit Singh, editor *Punjabi Bhain*, Ferozepur chartered the ship- *Kamagata Maru* and renamed it as *Guru Nanak Jahaz*. Three hundred emigrants from various places were picked up. When this ship reached Vancouver in June 1914 the emigrants were told that with the exception of former residents and few students no one could be allowed to land in Canada.⁵

The passengers of *Kamagata Maru* had to face many problems. The immigration authorities denied them food and water. The whole incident was published in the Newspapers of Canada and America.

On 18th July 1914 Canadian Police attempted to take possession of the ship. This brought the wrath of Dominion Government and the passengers found 3600 ton cruiser, the *Rainbow's* guns attacked on them. This issue was condemned by Indians in abroad. The Government of India on the other hand became more vigilant and issued Ordinance on 5th September 1914. This ordinance provided for the control of the persons entering British India either by sea or land. Latter on this ordinance was made the basis for Defence of India Act 1915.

Soon after the issue of this ordinance *Kamagata Maru* arrived on the mouth of Hughli on 26th September. This Ship was brought up the by river to Budge-Budge Ghat, where the special train was arranged for carrying them to the Punjab. The passengers did not want to go to their home as paupers as most of them had left all their homes with the hope of earning a livelihood abroad. They wanted to seek employment in a big city like Calcutta. The passengers therefore left the ship carrying *Guru Granth Sahib* and a flag in front of them and moved towards Calcutta in procession. They were forced back to railway station where a scuffle occurred and the police opened fire. Twenty one Sikhs were killed. Others were forcibly handcuffed and put in the train bound for the Punjab." Some of the

3. An account of Ghadar Conspiracy, published by Indian Police, p. 46.

4. Sedition Committee Report, 1916, National Archives of India, New Delhi, p. 147.

5. Account and Record of Case of Kamagata Maru. File No. 31 and 102, Available at Ganda Singh Reference Library, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 32.

passengers including Gurdit Singh escaped.⁶

The General situation in the Punjab was favourable for the leaders of *Ghadar* movement, though masses were not ready for revolt. There was great discontent among the Sikhs on account of various religious issues, such as proposal to limit the size of 'Kirpan' the religious symbol of the Sikhs. In the beginning of 1914 the Government had demolished the wall of *Gurdwara Rakab Ganj*, Delhi. This led a great agitation among the Sikhs against British Government. Police firing on the passengers of *Kamagata Maru*, who were mostly Sikhs brought the Sikh masses into direct conflict with British Government. All these factors prepared the ground for the leaders of *Ghadar* Movement for armed rebellion.⁷

The leadership of *Ghadar* during this phase was in the hands of Kesar Singh, Jagat Ram, Nur Singh, Jawala Singh, Mulla Singh, Bhai Parmanand of D.A.V College, Lahore, Rash Behari Bosh and Ganesh Pingley who joined them later. Jagat Ram was sent to Peshawar for purchase of arms. Bhai Parmanand was entrusted with propaganda work. Dr. Mathra Singh was appointed for manufacture of bombs. In the beginning the Ghadriles were most active in the Amritsar District. Amritsar was made the headquarter of *Ghadar* activities.

The leaders of *Ghadar* Movement met on the Diwali occasion at Amritsar and on annual fair at Nankana Sahib. Later on a meeting was held at Khana, District Amritsar in which Kartar Singh Sarabha participated. The next meeting was held on the monthly fair of *Amavas* in Taran Taran at Jhar Sahib, a *Gurdwara*. It was decided to act in unison with other revolutionaries working in different regions. A meeting was also held on 17th November 1914 at Ladhawal where it was decided that Kartar Singh Sarabha should lead the assault on Lahore cantonment. Nidhan Singh, leader of Ferozepur District decided to lead attack on Ferozepur Cantonment.⁸

Later on Rash Behari joined the movement and at his suggestion headquarters were shifted from Amritsar to Lahore. One of the major items of the programme was to persuade the troops to join the movement. Mula Singh was appointed for this purpose. The Sawars of 23rd Cavalry, especially Lachhman Singh Havaladar, were won over and they had promised to march out and join the armed rebellion. As a token of their assurance they send a sword to the leaders of the movement. Nidhan Singh and Kartar Singh contacted men at Ferozepur. During the first two months of 1914 emissaries were sent to all revolutionary groups of Northern India. The revolutionaries badly needed money. They went to various villages and openly declared there that their aim was not to injure anybody but to secure money for expelling the British from India.⁹

6. Ibid.

7. *Ghadar Rebellion in Punjab*, File N. 561, -Available at Ganda Singh Reference Library, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 10.

8. *Ghadar Lehar and Malwa*, File N. 38. Available at Ganda Singh Reference Library, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 15.

9. Ibid.

30th November, 1914 was fixed the date for general rising. Later on the date was postponed. Finally 21st February 1915 was fixed the date of *Ghadar* rebellion. The *Ghadar* leaders were to attack Lahore cantonment and to secure arms and ammunition, and co-operation of the 23rd cavalry. Kartar Singh, Balwant Singh and Ranvir Singh were to secure co-operation of 26th Punjab regiment¹⁰. It was planned that police stations were to be looted in order to secure arms.

The Amritsar police came to know the activities of Mula Singh and they appointed one Kirpal Singh to work secretly among the revolutionaries. Kirpal Singh was also a returned emigrant from Shanghai and was known to Nidhan Singh who admitted him in the inner circle of the workers. He reported to police the whole plot and its details and got arrested some revolutionaries at Amritsar. When the leaders of the movement came to know that police had got information about their programme they changed the date to be 19th February instead of 21st February. This was again communicated to the police and the Governor strengthened all the cantonments and took prevention measures. Mula Singh was arrested. The police attacked some of the revolutionaries' headquarters at Anarkali bazaar, Lahore but they attacked the police and killed one Sub-Inspector of Police. Arjan Singh was, however, captured and Sajan Singh and Banta Singh escaped¹¹.

On 19th February, 23rd Cavalry was kept on duty throughout the nights. Hence no body dared to move out. At Ferozepur, Kartar Singh was to attack on the cantonment. A party of about seventy persons was ready and Kirpal Singh was sent to bring those sepoys who had promised to join. But they never came and the party waited for whole night. After the collapse of the plot Rash Behari Bose fled from the Punjab and other leaders were arrested one by one.¹²

The military men who were to join the *Ghadar* movement were court-martialed. Nine batches of conspirators were trialed by special Tribunal under the Defense of India act. The Viceroy himself announced the sentence. Seven persons were sent to Andaman and Nicobar Island. Among them were Sohan Singh Bhakna, Bhai Parma Nand, Jagat Ram, Baba Wasakha Singh, Baba Nidhan Singh, Harnam Singh, Gurmukh Singh, Prithvi Singh Azad. On 19th November 1915 seven men including Kartar Singh Sarabha, Barkatulla Khan and Pandit Kasi Ram were executed under first Lahore conspiracy case 1914.

The total accused in the case were 61 persons but the main attraction was the case of Kartar Singh Sarabha. "Kartar Singh, son of Mangal Singh Jat, of Sarabha, Police Station Raikot, District Ludhiana, age 18 years". In spite of his younger age he was one of the most dangerous accused. Throughout the trial he did not answer any question put by counsel. Though he made very lengthy statement from page no 443-480¹³.

10. Ghadar Conspiracy Case 1914, National Archives of India, New Delhi, p. 108.

11. Ibid.

12. Kushwant Singh & Satinder Singh, "*India's first armed revolt*", Kalyani Publishers, Delhi, 1978 p.19.

13. Lahore Conspiracy Case 1915, National Archives of India, New Delhi, p. 10.

A conspiracy case of unprecedented magnitude was started in the Lahore Central Jail on April 27, 1915, before a Special Tribunal constituted for the purpose with sixty-two accused rising eventually to eighty of whom sixteen were found to be absconders.

The accused were charged in a wholesale fashion under Sections 121, 121A, 122, 122-109, 123, 124A, 124A-107, 131, 132, 302, 303/109/120B, 395, 395-397, 396, 412, 414 I.P.C., Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Explosive Substances Act" (Act VI of 1900)¹⁴.

Judgement was delivered on September 13, 1915, in a case which was unique in its origin, motive, time, character and ramifications, the number of men involved and the area covered by their activities. Twenty-four men were convicted to death and twenty-six to transportation for life. Others received varying terms of imprisonment, only a few being acquitted. On November 14, 1915, the Governor General-in-Council commuted the death sentences of seventeen leaving the seven others to die. They were :

- (i) Bakhshish Singh of Gilwali (Amritsar),
- (ii) Vishnu Ganesh Pingley of Talegaon Dhamtera district Poona (now Pune, Maharashtra),
- (iii) Surain Singh, son of Ishar Singh of Gilwali (Amritsar),
- (iv) Surain Singh, son of Bur Singh of Gilwali (Amritsar),
- (v) Harnam Singh of Bhatti Goraya (Sialkot, now in Pakistan)
- (vi) Jagat Singh of Sursingh (Amritsar), and
- (vii) Kartar Singh of Sarabha (Ludhiana)¹⁵.

All freedom fighters who had worked long years and suffered privations and sacrificed everything to free mother land.

APPROVERS IN LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE, 1915

- 1 Amar Singh, son of Uttam Singh, Rajput, of Nawanshahr, Police Station Rahon, Jullundur.
- 2 Mula Singh, *alias* Punjab Singh, son of Jawala Singh, Jat, of Mirankot Kalan, near Amritsar town, District Amritsar.
- 3 Jawala Singh, son of Roda Singh, of Guruser, Police Station Kot Bhai, Ferozepore.
- 4 Nawab Khan, son of Ghaus Khan, Rajput, of Halwara, Police Station Raikot, Ludhiana.
- 5 Udham Singh, son of Sohan Singh, of Padri, Police Station Tarn Taran, Amritsar.
- 6 Ichhra Singh, son of Bahal Singh, of Lohatbadi, Nabha State.
- 7 Narain Singh, son of Bakhshish Singh of Lohatbadi, Nabha State.

14. Proceedings, Home Political 1915, National Archives India, New Delhi, p. 19.

15. *War against King Emperor : Ghadar of 1915, (A Verdict by Special Tribunal)*, Malwinderjit Singh, Harinder Singh, Published by Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Trust, 23-G, Sarabha Nagar, Ludhiana, Punjab, India.

- 8 Sucha Singh, son of Rulia Singh, Jat, of Jhabbewal, Police Station Sahnewal, Ludhiana.
- 9 Umrao Singh, son of Rulia Singh, Jat, of Bholapur, Police Station Sahnewal, Ludhiana.
- 10 Dalip Singh, son of Hazura Singh, Jat, of Bholapur, Police Station Sahnewal, Ludhiana.

THE GHADAR HEROES OF LUDHIANA DISTRICT

*Pushpinder Kaur**

The word *Ghadar* means revolt or rebellion. It was a revolt against the British rule in India and was started and organised by the Indian immigrants of Canada and U.S.A. *Ghadar* movement was the result of the general and natural reaction of political, social and economic conditions that prevailed in India under the British rule. The people were hard pressed by the adverse economic conditions. These immigrants were adventurous and hardy people. They worked hard and got good wages and very well in these countries. They also saw the American people's upholding the American Declaration of independence of 4th July 1776, establishing the right of freedom and liberty of every human being in political, social and economic fields. Indian minds were charged with the feeling of freedom and consequently they wanted to get rid of foreign rule in their country.

In 1908, in Seattle (Washington) Mr. Taraknath started a monthly magazine named '*Free India*', by which he advocated armed rebellion against the British rule in India. Mr. Taraknath also established 'East India Association' in 1911.¹ In 1912 in Oregon State 'Hindustani Association' was formed and it was decided to start Urdu weekly newspaper '*The India*'. In March 1913 a meeting of association was called and it was decided in the meeting that the Hindustani Association branches should be headquartered in 'San Francisco' California. The plan was also made to open branches in other cities. The headquarter in San Francisco to be named as *Ghadar Ashram* or *Ugantar Ashram*. The party to be known as Hindi Association of Pacific Coast. Their aim was to overthrow the British rule with force.²

Ludhiana District occupied a honourable place in the *Ghadar* movement (1913-15) which aimed at liberating the country from the British rule through armed revolt. Prominent among these from the District who played a leading role in the movement were Kartar Singh Sarabha, Rulia Singh, Bhai Randhir Singh, Munshi Karim Baksh, Dewa Singh, Nand Singh Kella and Gurmukh Singh. They were tried and convicted by special Tribunals.³ Among these heroes we will be dilating primarily only three personalities namely Kartar Singh Sarabha, Rulia Singh Sarabha and Bhai Nand Singh.

Kartar Singh Sarabha Grewal was born in a Sikh family at village Sarabha

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1. K.M.Panikkar, *Indian Nationalism: Its Origin, History and Ideals*, Michigan, 1920, p.36

2. *Panjab District Gazetteer Ludhiana Supplement*, 1985, Chandigarh, p.10

3. Harish K. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, Amritsar, 1983, p.54

in the District of Ludhiana (Punjab, India), on 24 May 1896. His father's name was Sardar Mangal Singh. After receiving his early education from Sarabha village, he entered the Malwa Khalsa High School at Ludhiana, for his matriculation. When he was fifteen his parents put him to board a ship for America to work there. The ship landed the American port San Francisco in January 1912. Where he noticed the American people's misbehaviour towards Indians because they were from the slave country.⁴

In 1914 Kartar Singh was enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley for a degree in chemistry and also took up the work of picking fruits in Orchards. His association with Nalanda Club of Indian students of Berkeley aroused his patriotic sentiments. So he talked to other Indians about getting their country's liberation from the British.⁵

When the *Ghadar* Party was founded in mid-1913 with Sohan Singh, a Sikh peasant from Bhakna village in Amritsar District, as president and Lala Hardyal as secretary. Kartar Singh stopped his studies, moved in with Lala Hardyal and became his helpmate in running the revolutionary newspaper *Ghadar* (Revolt). He undertook the responsibility for printing of Gurmukhi Edition of the paper. He composed patriotic poetry for it and wrote articles. He also went out among the Sikh farmers and arranged meetings at which he and other *Ghadar* leaders made speeches urging them for united action against the British.

As World War First broke out in 1914, the members of *Ghadar* party were openly exhorted to return to India to make armed revolt against the British. Kartar Singh left the United States on 15 September 1914. He returned to India via Colombo, resolved to set up in his village a centre on the model of *Gadar* party's *Ugantar Ashram* in San Francisco. Then Bhai Parmanand arrived in India in December 1914 to lead the movement. Kartar Singh worked for the network of *Ghadar* party in Ludhiana District.⁶ Kartar Singh also made connection with the Bengal revolutionaries. He went to Bengal and made contacts with revolutionaries such as Vishnu Ganesh Pingley, Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Rash Bihari Bose. With Vishnu Ganesh Pingley, Kartar Singh visited cantonments at Meerut, Agra, Banaras, Ambala, Lahore and Rawalpindi, with a view to incite soldiers to revolt against the British. As far as armaments, Kartar Singh and his associates succeeded in manufacturing bombs at Jhabeval and Ieter Lohatbaddi both in Ludhiana District. Kartar Singh also organised raids on the villages of Sahneval and Mansuran in January 1915 in order to procure funds for the party.

In February 1915 just before the planned revolt was erupted then was a massive round up Ghadar leaders. Following the disclosure made by a police informer Kirpal, who had gained admittance in the party. Tundilatt escaped to Kabul, Kartar Singh, Jagat Singh and Harman Singh were seized on 2 March of 1915 at Wilsonpur

4. Gurdev Singh Deol, *The Role of Ghadar Party In the National Movement*, Delhi, 1969, p. 44-53.

5. Rattan Singh, *A Brief History of Hindustan Ghadar Party*, Delhi, 1929, p. 5.

6. Sohan Singh Josh, *Hindustan Ghadar Party: A Short History*, Michigan, 1978, Vol. I, p. 109.

in Shahpur District where they had gone to incite the troops of 22nd cavalry. The plan was unfortunately failed due to infiltration. The result was that seventeen brave sons of Punjab were hanged, many sentenced for life or various terms of imprisonment. The trail of arrested leaders in the Lahore conspiracy case of 1915 to 1916 highlighted the role of Kartar Singh Sarabha in the movement of 1915.

Rulia Singh Sarabha was a *Ghadar* leader, son of Bhai Jagat Singh of the village Sarabha in Ludhiana district. Because of his meager means, he left home to seek employment outside the country. He ultimately got job in Astori, Oregon, in the United States, where many Punjabis were working on farms. Kartar Singh Sarabha, then a student at the university of California, Berkeley, used to come to that place during the holidays.⁷

Rulia Singh helped him secure part time work to earn money to pay his university fees. His contact with Kartar Singh, the articles in the *Ghadar* and speeches by leaders of the Indian revolutionary movement had a stirring effect on him, he left further embittered by the daily humiliation, he like other Indians, suffered as one coming from slave country. On the out break of World War First, Indians in America were exhorted to return to their country and participate in armed revolution against the British under the aegis of the *Ghadar* party. Rulia Singh, Noni 36 years old, was one of those who responded to the call.

He had neither money nor proper clothes, but he was provided money by his friends. They attempted to free India from the British but failed. Rulia Singh was arrested along with others and tried in the first Lahore conspiracy case. He was given the penalty of death, but the sentence was later commuted to transportation for life by the viceroy. Rulia Singh was sent to Andaman Cellular Jail where he was subjected to violence, put on short rations and made to wear hand cuffs. He contracted tuberculosis which proved fatal.

Bhai Nand Singh was born around 1870 AD in village 'Kalle' near Halwara in district Ludhiana. His father's name was Ram Singh Kella and Mother's name was Fatto, who was the daughter of Grewal's of village Dhepai in district Ludhiana. Nand Singh was married in village Bhutta near Rara Sahib in district Ludhiana, to Sant Kaur. He had one daughter and two sons namely Kishno, Kishan Singh and Karnail Singh. In the beginning of twentieth century, young boys from his village were coming to America and Canada. Nand Singh made up his mind to reach Canada. He collected fare with the help of his father and reached Calcutta along with Muslim boys. From Calcutta he boarded to Hong Kong from where he reached Vancouver in mid 1907.

In Canada he toiled himself in saw mills. Most of the time was spent in Frazer Mill of West Minister. Famous revolutionary Giani Bhagwan Singh visited Vancouver in the summer of 1913 from Hong Kong. He used to deliver lectures at Gurdwara of Frazer Mill. His fiery speeches left a deep impact on Bhai Nand Singh's inquisitive mind. The political awakening by Giani Bhagwan Singh of

7. Anil Baran Ganguly, *Ghadar Revolution in America*, New Delhi, 1980, p.59.

Canadian Indians was sounding like death knell for the Canadian Government as well as British Empire. Canadian Government made arrangements to arrest and extradite Giani Bhagwan Singh. Bhai Nand Singh along with his friends secured monetary help to pursue legal battle of Giani Bhagwan Singh.⁸

In 1913, when *Ghadar* party came into existence, Bhai Nand Singh became the member of this party. He subscribed the Newspaper '*Ghadar*' from San Francisco, even he sent this newspaper to his relatives and friends in India. In the statement given in Lahore Conspiracy case, he specially mentions as having sent a copy of '*Ghadar*' to the revenue official of village Bhaini.⁹

On the outbreak of World War First, Indians in America and Canada were exhorted to return to their country to participate in armed revolution against the British under the aegis of *Ghadar* party. Bhai Nand Singh also decided to come back. He purchased four pistols from Victoria and boarded on 'Maxico Maru Ship'. His friend Hardit Singh Dallewal along with prominent revolutionaries of Canada namely Bhai Jawand Singh Nagal, Bhai Bir Singh Bahawal and Bhai Har Singh Soond were also in the same ship. 'Maxico Maru' reached Hong Kong via Naga Saki, Kove, Mauji and Shanghai. They reached Hong Kong, where his friend Hardit Singh Dallewal was caught carrying a pistol. Bhai Nand Singh handed over these four Pistols to Dr. Mathura Singh in Gurdwara of Hong Kong as per the orders of *Ghadar* party. Bhai Nand Singh boarded a ship named 'Naam Sang' from Hong Kong on September 09, 1914. *Ghadar* party president Sohan Singh Bhakna was also travelling in the same ship. Bhai Nand Singh reached Calcutta on 13 October, 1914. They were again frisked in Calcutta. Ghadarites were made to proceed to Punjab on a train.

A major chunk of Ghadarites were arrested in Ludhiana and were sent to Jail. But Bhai Nand Singh and his friend Hardit Singh Dallewal escaped arrest. After spending ten days in his village, Bhai Nand Singh started making inroads with the Ghadarites of Malwa region. He met Jagat Singh Binjhal, Arjan Singh, Nawab Khan and Ishar Singh. Bhai Nand Singh also held a meeting with Kartar Singh Saraba at Phagwara¹⁰ and planned to make robbery so that they could purchase weapons, on 1 January 1915 in a village near Mahalpur. But their plan was failed. They also planned to make robbery at village Channer near Malerkotla on 29 January 1915.¹¹ Bhai Nand Singh saw his party's weakness in the lack of weapons and cooperation from the people. Bhai Nand Singh returned to his village and British Government arrested him on 3 March 1915, through an informer.¹² Bhai Nand Singh was sent to Ludhiana Jail and police tortured him in the Jail. Then he

8. Malwinderjit Singh and Harinder Singh (eds.), *War Against King Emperor : Ghadar of 1914-15: A verdict by Special Tribunal*, Ludhiana, 2001, p.96

9. Ibid., p. 97.

10. Ibid., p. 99.

11. Isemonger and Slattery, *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy 1913-15*, Lahore, 1919, p.114.

12. Malwinderjit Singh and Harinder Singh, op. cit., p. 104.

was shifted to central Jail Lahore and tried in First Lahore Conspiracy Case. He was given the penalty of death, but the sentence was later commuted to transportation for life by the Viceroy Lord Hardinge. Bhai Nand Singh was sent to Andaman Cellular Jail.

On 10 December 1915, Bhai Nand Singh reached at Port Blair. Cellular Jail of Andaman was a damn Hell. The prisoners were treated badly. Young revolutionaries of Bengal were already there. Some prisoners became mad and some of them fell ill. To get rid of this miserable condition, they hurt themselves with needles. Bhai Nand Singh with other Ghadarites made many time hunger strike to show his resentment against the Jail authorities. All these news of miserable condition of the prisoners reached India. Indians raised their voice against the tortures made by the Jail authorities to the freedom fighters.

The British Government established 'Indian Jails Committee' on 28 April 1919. This Committee inspected the prisons and listen to the grievances of the prisoners. This Committee made many recommendations to government to make Jail reforms.

Bhai Nand Singh spent many years in Andaman Cellular Jail and then shifted to Madras Jail and then Central Jail Lahore. Bhai Nand Singh was at Lahore Central Jail when Bhagat Singh was sentenced. Now Bhai Nand Singh was shifted to Multan Jail. In Multan Jail Bhai Nand Singh and his co-prisoners Bhai Chuhan Singh started hunger strike against the Jail authorities. After two- three months' hunger strike, Bhai Nand Singh's condition deteriorated and he was shifted to hospital. The Jail authorities wanted to broke his hunger strike with the help of his brother and other relatives, but they failed.¹³ Bhai Nand Singh remained on hunger strike for eleven months and became very weak.¹⁴ From Multan Jail he was shifted to Ambala Jail.¹⁵ At last he was released in May 1934 from Ambala Jail. After being released from the Jail he joined Congress Party. But he was against the Congress's anti- people policies. So he left the Congress Party in 1950 and joined the Socialist Party.¹⁶

In 1950 Socialist Party agitated against the Government because of the acquisition for the Development of Chandigarh. Bhai Nand Singh was arrested and produced before a magistrate named Bhanot, who sentenced him to thirteen months', imprisonment.

Now Bhai Nand Singh was sent to Hoshiarpur Jail. Then he was shifted to Jalandhar Jail where he started hunger strike against the Jail authorities to make reforms in the prison administration. After strong public protests Government released Bhai Nand Singh from the Jail. He passed away on 5 September 1950 and his body was taken in a big procession to the funeral pyre.

13. *Kirti*, Amritsar, 18 February 1934, p.2.

14. *Ibid*, 25 Feb. 1934, p.5.

15. *Ibid*, 14 May, 1934, p.2.

16. Visakha Singh, *Malwa Sikh Itihas*, Vol II, Amritsar 1980, p.319.

At last the *Ghadar* movement failed. *Ghadar* party was only one and half years old. They did not establish their base in India before they came and started activities in Punjab. They also failed to hide their plans. They did not get the support of the masses as Gandhiji did in their movements. Ghadarites failed in their movement and the British Government tried and punished the Ghadarites.

THE GHADAR IDEOLOGY AND VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT - A CASE STUDY OF VILLAGE KHAROUDI

*Charanjit Kaur Maan**

*Gurmej Singh Maan***

The Ghadar movement played a significant role in the independence of India. Its role has well been recognized by the Indian as well as western scholars. The present study is a case of the village Kharoudi which is located on Phagwara-Behram-Mahilpur Road. It falls in district Hoshiarpur. This village is also known as Ghadarites' village. About 8 Ghadarites hailed from this village. The ideology and the social vision of the Ghadarites witness a significant impact on the village development. Dr. Gurdev Singh Gill, whose ancestors were reputed Ghadarites in the village, along with Dr. Raghbir Singh Bassi, a reputed academician and President Indo Canadian Friendship Society, mobilized the support of philanthropists to develop their village as a model. The project of village Kharodi had received national appreciation. Even the Honorable former President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam showed keen interest in visiting this village on 23rd March 2003 and declared it as a "Model Village of India"¹. The present study is based on survey and interview with the family members of the Ghadarites of the village. This study also suggests that the oral History of Ghadarites needs be further documented by conducting case studies.

The Ghadr Party was determined to wage war against the British in India and with that object decided to send arms and men to go back to India to start revolt with the help of soldiers and local revolutionaries. Several thousand men volunteered to go back to India. Millions of dollars were collected for that purpose. The Ghadarites contacted Indian soldiers in the Far East, South-East Asia and all over India and persuaded many regiments to revolt. 21 February 1915 was fixed for an all - India revolt and vigorous preparations were made for that purpose. Rash Behari Bose, Sachindra Sanyal, Ganesh Pingle and Baghi Kartar Singh prepared a master plan for that purpose. Some revolutionaries were killed and several others were arrested. They were also hanged. The all India revolt failed because one Kirpal Singh passed on all the secret plans to the Government. Many places were raided and bombs were recovered. Secret papers were also captured

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1. Information was provided by Dr. Gurdev Singh Gill and Dilbag Ram, during the visit to this village on March 11, 2013.

by Government. Most of the leaders of the Punjab fell into the hands of the police. The Ghadarites were tried in 9 batches in the Lahore Conspiracy case and the supplementary cases. Out of 291 sent up for trial, 42 were imprisoned for varying terms and 42 were acquitted. Prominent leaders like Baghi Kartar Singh and Pingle admitted that they were wholly responsible for the conspiracy.²

The village Kharoudi has a population of 700 persons in 150 households. The village has a large number of NRI population. The leadership and initial funds for the development of this village come from the Chairman Dr. Raghbir Singh Bassi (USA) who is president of Indo Canadian Friendship Society of British Columbia, Canada and former Vice Chancellor of Alaska University of America and Vice Chairman Dr. Gurdev Singh Gill (Canada), who belong to this village. Dr. Gill is a retired physician turned engineer with keen interest in public health. The details of this project are : Sewerage Rs. 13.77 Lakhs, Water Supply Rs. 1.01 Lakhs, Cement Concrete Rs. 12.47 Lakhs, Solar Light System (32 lights) Rs. 3.67 Lakhs, Solar Pump (Two) Rs. 1.96 Lakhs, Sand Filter Rs. 4.21 Lakhs, Fish Tank Rs. 5.96 Lakhs, Park Rs. 4.50 Lakhs, Repair Rs. 10.00 Lakhs. **Total Rs. 57.55 Lakhs.**³

The village Kharoudi now boasts of underground sewerage, common flush toilets, concrete paved streets, primary school and Gurudwara. Solar street light, a new cemetery, internet kiosks and ultra modern Panchayat Ghar with residential facilities are the other highlights. Now Kharoudi is the model for the project and an emigrant from Kharoudi Dr. Gurdev Singh Gill is the person who initiated the effort. In this way the project has extended itself from Kharoudi to other villages, beginning with Barhampur, Dingrian, district hoshiarpur, Chaheru and the other villages of Punjab. The villagers has regards for the Ghadarites. The family members of the third generation of Ghadarites along with the active cooperation of the overseas Indians has shown their interests regarding social welfare and upliftment by constructing the statues of their ancestors in the village park which had important role in Ghadar movement.

These were some Ghadarites of village Kharoudi who participated and played an active role in the Ghadar Movement⁴: Asa Singh, son of Uttam Singh went to America in 1905 where he became a member of the Ghadr party, and spent 6½ years there. He married to a Maxican woman and had only one son. He returned to India in March 1913, and was concerned in the outrage committed by Ghaniya Singh in the Patiala State. He returned to America in 1915. At the end of 1921 he was reported to have paid huge sum for the question of the rights of East Indians

2. Mahajan, V.D., *Modern Indian History*, S. Chand and Company, New Delhi, p.40.

3. Information was provided by Dr. Gurdev Singh Gill and Dilbag Ram during the visit to this village on March 11, 2013.

4. The Ghadr Directory containing the names of persons who had taken part in the Ghadr Movement in North America, Europe, Africa and Afghanistan as wel as in India, Compiled by The Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India. (this supersedes the Punjab Ghadr Directory issued in 1917), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 45.

to the U.S. citizenship. Early in 1922 he was in the Imperial valley, and reported to be a close adherent of the Ghadr Party. In August of the same year he was elected member of the General Ghadr committee for publishing the "*Ghadr*" newspaper. In 1926 his name appeared as member of the Hindu Advisory committee on Sailendra Nath Ghose's Indian Freedom Foundation of New York. He was then working at Clint in Texas.⁵ He is reported to be deeply interested in the Kirti movement and wrote to Arjan Singh of Kharaudi to help the cause. In 1930 in the Imperial Valley he is believed to have sheltered Rattan Singh alias Ishar Singh who had arrived from Europe to see the Ghadr Party leaders. His address in July 1932 was P.O.H.55, Clint, Texas. His present address is Sewtelle, Los Angeles Co., U.S.A.

Arjan Singh, "Sach", was born in 1906 and he was cousin of Ganga Singh. He was basically a poet and was writer as well as speaker of the poems related to Ghadar movement. He was a Ghadrte and was connected with the Canadian American Press Society. In 1925, he was imprisoned in the Multan Jail. In 1929 while he was in Multan Jail he contributed an article to the "*Hindustan Ghadr*". In 1928 he sent a letter to the Canadian American Press Society of the Doaba announcing his acceptance of the Society's offer to appoint him as their paid teacher in the Punjab. In the same year he was reported to have received a sum of Rs. 300 from Kapur Singh of his village from America for the relief of the families of the Babbar Akalis. He contributed a poem to the "*Kirti*" for May 1928 and through an article published in the "*Akali-te-Pardeshi*" of 2nd September 1931 he reminded the leaders of a Diwan held in his village in October 1928 to commemorate the memory of the Babbar Akalis and asked all Indians to make the celebration of Akalis Day in 1931 a success. In January 1932 he received a letter from Asa Singh of Kharaudi from Clint, Texas, in which he was asked to assist the Kirti Kisan Party. He was a regular recipient of Ghadr literature.⁶

Kapur Singh, son of Sham Singh, Jat, of Kharaudi, was a matriculate. Emigrated to the United States of America in 1906. He was a rich man who worked at Mohawk, California, until 1910 and afterward in the Hop-yards at Sacramento. He acted as an accountant under Mao Singh of village Paldi Distt. Hoshiarpur. He had only one daughter and he left sixty million dollars for her daughter in USA. He crossed over to Canada early in 1912 and opened a Real Estate Office in Johnson Street under the name of the Punjab Real Estate Co. In 1913, he joined Dr. Sundar Singh in the staff of the "*Sansar*" paper and in the same year became Secretary of the Guru Nanak Mining & Trust Co. in Vancouver. He was one of the leading agitators at the time of the deportation of Bhagwan Singh of Village Viring, District Amritsar (a former leader of the Ghadr Party), and the "Komagata maru" incident. Revolutionaries like Hussain Rahim, a Ghadrte, Lachman Singh and Gurdit Singh were his associates and co-workers in British Columbia. He wrote seditious letters to one Tara Singh of his village in 1916 who

5. Information was provided by Dr. Gurdev Singh Gill, Didar Singh and Satwant Singh during the visit to this village on March 11, 2013.

6. The Ghadr Directory, pp. 13-15.

at that time was living at Sawtelle, Los Angeles. He was a regular recipient of the "Ghadr". Presented along with Rahim and others an address to the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his visit to S. Vancouver in 1919, ventilating the grievances of Indians in Canada. Was appointed to the Committee of the United India Home Rule League of Canada in August 1920. Spoke at a meeting of the League on 21st January 1922 appreciating the efforts made by the Indian National Congress in making India a Republic. Presided a meeting of the Canadian American Press Society of the Doaba on 19th February 1922, at which he read out letters from Piara Singh and Mehar Singh of Langeri, relating to the work done by the Akali Dal in India. He was elected to the Committee as second Vice-President. In July 1922, he was reported to be one of the active business heads of the Committee of the Victoria and Island Doaba Society. Subsequently he held the offices of the Canadian American Press Society of the Doaba. In April 1923 he issued an appeal for the relief of the families of the political prisoners in India.

In 1926 he collected funds for the Khalsa Diwan Society from Indians in the Duncan locality. He was one of those present at the time of the presentation of a petition to Lord Willingdon, in April 1927, claiming full right of citizenship to Indians in Canada. Subsequently collected funds for the Akali agitation. Interested himself in the case of Dasaundha Singh of Dhanda Kalan and Harbans Singh who had been arrested in Shanghai. In August 1928 he visited Seattle to confer with certain Ghadr representative regarding the future programme in India. He also gave financial help to Kartar Singh of Mahilpur for starting two periodicals. In October 1929 a suggestion which was eventually given up was made to induce Kapur Singh and other businessmen to charter a vessel between India and Canada ostensibly in the lumber trade, but really to provide a useful cover to smuggle arms into India. Towards the end of 1928 he was active in the formation of the Canadian branch of the Indian National Congress. Visited California in the end of 1929 with 3 others and it was suggested by the Ghadar Party that Kartar Singh along with Gurdit Singh, Banta Singh and Harbant Singh might be deputed for work in India. Kapur Singh was not inclined to leave Canada. He was elected President of the War Council of the Canadian Hindustani Congress in August 1930. He collected funds for the defense of Bhagat Singh (murderer of a Police Officer in India) and his comrades in November 1930. Was one of the leading officials of the Doaba Sudhar Society. Reported to have been smuggled across the Canadian border under the assumed name of Lachman Singh, with Didar Singh and Gurdit Singh Bilga and to have visited Vancouver in the end of August 1931 with the object of persuading some leading Indians to return to India for the Ghadr cause. After assuring his countrymen that he would do his best for the cause he sailed for India on 3rd October 1931 and arrived at Calcutta by the S.S. "Yuen Sang" on 9th November 1931. He returned to Canada in February 1933. Exercised considerable influence in the Indian Colony in British Columbia and was a keen supporter of the Ghadr cause.⁷

7. The Ghadr Directory, pp. 151-152. Satwant Singh, interviewed on March 11, 2003.

Kuldip Singh, son of Ram Singh, was born in 1910. He was a teacher in the Nagal Kalan School. He had only one son. He left for Fiji about 1922-23 to join his father. He is reported to belong to a family with extremist Akali views though there was nothing against him politically or otherwise in his district prior to his deportment for Fiji. He was an assistant teacher at the Sangam School, Nadi, but was dismissed. He was a permanent subscriber to the "*Kirti*" and founder and Secretary of the Hindustan Sudhar Association, P.O.Box 21, Nadi, Fiji. He had been corresponding with Sikh revolutionaries in India and America. He and his father were reported to have collected subscriptions for the Ghadr Party and sent the amount to India to his uncle Arjan Singh Sach of Kharaudi. Since 1928 he was employed as an assistant teacher in Sangam School, Nadi. He is reported to be the leader of the Ghadr Party in the Fiji Islands. His address was, c/o The Sikh Temple, Suva.⁸

Ganga Singh, son of Attar Singh, Jat, Sallow complexion, height 5'-8/9", age 65/70 years, was born in 1906 and he returned to India in 1923 and further returned back to America in 1925. In 1929 he was reported to be a regular quarterly subscriber to the Ghadr Party on behalf of the *Kirti* Fund. At a meeting of the Los Angeles Branch of the Ghadr Party on 3rd April 1932 he was elected President of that branch.⁹

Ram Singh was the father of Kuldip Singh a notorious Ghadr in Fiji. Ram Singh is said to have served in the Punjab Police for 3 years and gone to Fiji in 1909. In 1916 he joined the Fiji constabulary and took his discharge in April 1922. From 1924-27 he worked as a clerk to the Revenue Officer, Nadi and at present was said to be running a cloth shop in Nadi. He was reported to have collected subscriptions for the Ghadr party and sent the money to India to his brother, Arjan Singh 'Sach' of Kharaudi.¹⁰

Tara Singh, son of Sham Singh, Jat Sikh wheatish complexion; height 5'-7/8"; age 40/42 years. First went to Canada at the age of 15 to join his younger brother Kapur Singh who was working in the Doaba Mail Co. He was described as a staunch member of the revolutionary party, and returned home in company with Piara Singh of Langeri. He was suspected of complicity in the murder of Chanda Singh, a loyal Zaildar of Nangal Kalan, Hoshiarpur district. He was known to have been a supporter of the Babbar Akalis and was believed to have helped them with money obtained from America. Again he went to Canada about in 1927, travelling via Europe, having been summoned by his brother who then intended to return to India, was reported in 1929 to be a regular quarterly subscriber to the Ghadr party on behalf of the *Kirti* fund, and to have sent along with others some money to Chint Kaur, mother of Kuldip Singh of Kharaudi, for the purpose of convening an Akali diwan in the village as was done in 1928.¹¹

8. The Ghadr Directory, pp. 174-175.

9. The Ghadr Directory, p. 79.

10. The Ghadr Directory, p. 245.

11. The Ghadr Directory, p. 281.

Bishan Singh alias Dilbagh Singh, alias Nagina Singh, alias Gulzara Singh, son of Ganga Singh, was born in 1912. He was a personality of social mind. He went to America in 1935. He spent about four years in Fiji and then proceeded to America. He was one of the subscribers to the sum of Rs.3,000 despatched from the Pacific Coast of America to India in connection with the holding of a Political Diwan in October 1928 to commemorate the death of the Babbar Akalis. He was a great friend of the well known Kapur Singh, of Kharaudi. Was reported in 1929 to be a regular quarterly subscriber to the Ghadr Party on behalf of the Kirti. In December 1930 he was reported to have arrived in Canada secretly from the United States, and it was surmised that he was carrying funds from California. In Canada he assumed the name of Gulzara Singh in order not to attract the attention of the Canadian immigration authorities. He was acting as a channel of communication between the Ghadr Party in San Francisco and Kuldip Singh in Fiji. He returned to India from Canada on 15th December 1930. According to his own statement he was at the Ghadr Ashram in San Francisco at the time when Raja Mehendra Pratap visited it in 1930. He was also aware, and interested himself in the organization of the Canadian Hindustani Congress. He was a regular recipient of the Ghadr literature. Owned landed property and worked as a farmer at his village.¹²

The study finds direct correlation between the progressive ideas of the Ghadar movement and the development of a village as a model for whole of the state. Although various studies have been conducted on the role of the Ghadar movement, yet some more case studies are also required to be conducted to unearth some more historical factual realities and the contemporary relevance of the ideology of the Ghadar movement.

12. The Ghadr Directory, p. 44.

BOOK-REVIEW

Ghadr Party Lehar, by Jagjit Singh, Navyug, New Delhi, pp. 1-471, Price Rs. 325/-

The writer is pioneer among those who opted to assess the Ghadr Movement in its struggle against the British Imperialism. He examined character of peasant classes in the Punjab, causes of emigration and exposures to new environs, beginning of the struggle and formation of the Party with its objectives, programmes and activities including the *Ghadr* newspaper, the Komagata Maru episode, World War scenario, phases of *Ghadr* in Hindustan, downfall, revolt at Singapore, failure factors and its character. Also given in the book are appendices, photographs of prominent Ghadrites and some maps.

He argued that the movement comprised basically of the middle rank peasant proprietors of Punjab who had migrated to Canada, U.S.A. and Far East under pressure to earn livelihood. With their background of tribal fighting instincts coupled with difficulties and the new environs brought a change in their political consciousness. It resulted in formation of societies and organisations both in Canada and America which gave birth to the Ghadr Party. Despite racialism, understanding of the international scenario created among them a national awareness, patriotism and sense of nationality. The American ideas of freedom, equality and unity fascinated them. However, this awareness was not the work of some individuals, groups or party but was an outcome of the atmosphere and the spontaneous reaction to that and to their sharpened realisation of country's slavery and hatred against the British.

The building of movement first began in Canada but shifted to America because Canada was pro-British. The *Ghadr* paper started by the 'Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast' became synonymous that the Party had to adopt this name. The author brought out that views of Lala Hardyial were never stable and it was misleading to claim that Party formation was the result of some conspiracy hatched by Lala Hardyial and the German Agents. Infact, it was a continuation of the campaign started by Canadian Hindis but the Ghadr Party became instrumental or representative of the Ghadr Party Movement.

It was non-communal, revolutionary national movement with objective of establishing a Panchayati Raj. Yet majority of Ghadrites were Sikh peasants but Hindus, Muslims and others also joined. Singapore Regiment was purely of Muslims. Four Americans also came. One of the scheme of Ghadrites was that to expel British it was necessary to join Afghanistan and Trans-Indus Frontier tribes. Revolt of native army regiments was central; common people and students were the next in cooperation. The Party intended to exploit international situation by

taking help from anti-British forces.

It was also part of plan that Turkish army with the help of Germany would capture Suez Canal and Hindi regiments in various countries would revolt. Singapore rebellion was its outcome and also the attempted revolts of Siam and Burma along with contact to Amir of Kabul. Some Ghadriles were active in Iran. Help was also taken from Germany and then Russia and ultimately became anti-America because of its pro-British stance. It was also thought of taking China's help. The *Ghadr* preached armed revolution against the British in Hind.

It was also revealed that after participating for five months, Lala Hardyal left Ghadr Party and America. The episode of Komagata Maru had contributed to accelerate the movement. The Party viewed that due to war, parts of British forces would be busy in Europe and the Hindis were ready to join them. In December 1914 the first phase activities ended and the next began with Ras Bihari Bose and Vishnu Ganesh Pingle when its links were developed with Bengal, U.P. and Rajputana.

However the Punjabi Ghadriles taught Bengalis how to work among army units and the Bengalis the organisational strategy. But activities of Lala Hardyal, after leaving America, were part of the committee of Hindi revolutionaries in Berlin but not of Ghadr Party. The General Staff of Germany had also three major plans to assist Ghadriles. Ram Chander Peshaweria became dictator and traitor; a British agent who divided the Party. After his death Party got reunited and was active till 1947 but the Ghadr Party movement could not be revived.

Open declaration, unpreparedness of common people, no support from political parties and the early beginning of the War constituted prominent factors of its failure. Yet the movement got more sacrifices through hangings and life imprisonments, etc. But it succeeded in establishing that given the national and international situations, it was practically possible to overthrow an alien regime through armed rebellion. In the end, it goes to the credit of the writer that no other work could match his understanding.

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